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ABSTRACT

This course, one of 16 sequential courses comprising phase one of a part-time Bachelor of Arts degree program in Australian Studies, uses Australian literary and documentary writings of the 19th century to examine the formation of the proposition that the Australian national character is based on rural life. The course is designed for independent study combined with tutorial sessions. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the course and its study objectives. Chapter 2, "Defining the Argument: Some Key Terms and Oppositions," deals with myths and legends, texts and contexts, literature as reflection versus literature as production, indigenous culture versus imported culture, and city versus country. Chapter 3, "The Australian Legend Debate," covers both the thesis of Russel Ward's "The Australian Legend," and critiques of it. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 examine Australian independence from an historical perspective, independence from a literary perspective, and women and the bush. The first tutorial covers course materials and readings in the first chapters. The second tutorial is designed to recapitulate key issues in the course, practice literary analysis, and provide advice on the assessment item. Also included are lists of required readings, additional readings, a bibliography, self-assessment questions, and a glossary of literary terms. (IS)

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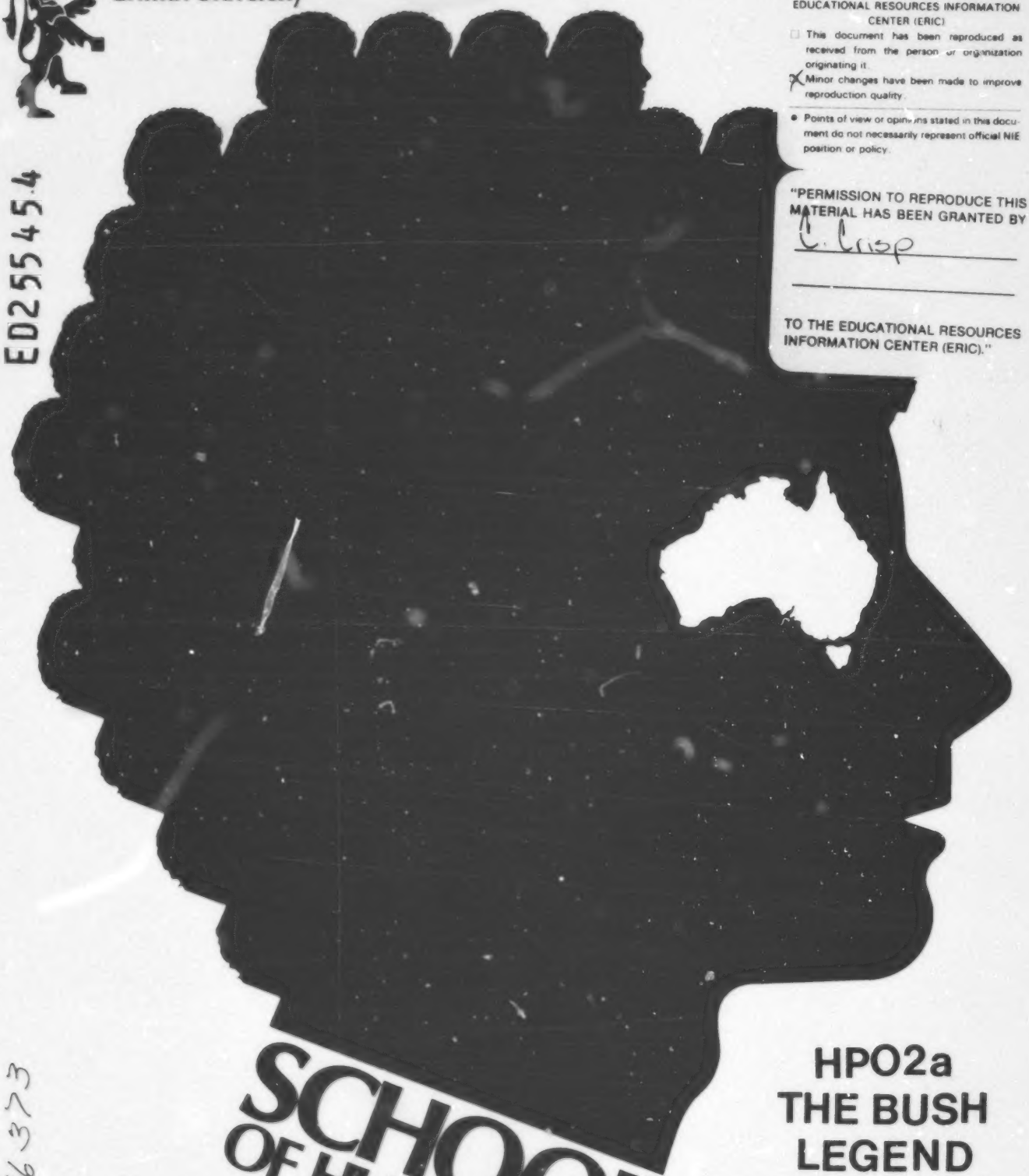

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

HPO2a
THE BUSH LEGEND

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PART TIME BA DEGREE

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

PART-TIME BA DEGREE PROGRAMME

COURSE HP02a

THE BUSH LEGEND

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20 March 1984
HP02a/2

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COURSE INFORMATION: HP02a

Course readings

For this course you will need to buy two text books, both available in the University bookshop:

Manning Clark, ed., *Sources of Australian History* (Oxford University Press 1977) ($11.95)

Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Oxford University Press 1966) ($6.99)

Use will also be made of two text books purchased for a previous course, namely:

Leon Cantrell, ed., *The 1890s* (University of Queensland Press 1977)

Richard White, *Inventing Australia* (Allen & Unwin 1981)

In addition, a number of readings accompany this study guide in the course package. The aims of these readings and when to read them are indicated in the study guide. A single rapid reading of an extract or chapter will be all that is necessary in some cases, but others will demand more of your time and concentration.

The sources from which readings are drawn are available in the Griffith University Library, should you be interested in consulting them.

At the end of the study guide there is a list of further readings relevant to this course but reference to these is neither compulsory nor necessary for successful completion of the assessment.

Tutorial activities

From Course HP02a on you will no longer be allocated to specific tutorial groups. Also the number of different tutorial programmes offered for each course falls from 3 to 2. This means that the amount of work between tutorials may be quite substantial - perhaps more than you have been used to doing in a week. However, tutorials are not necessarily placed evenly throughout the course and you may find that working up to a tutorial and then doing no more work in the course until after you have attended it, is not the most productive way of pacing your work in this programme.

Think about using tutorials in ways that you, personally, find most helpful - for some courses this may mean not coming at all; in other cases you may find it useful to attend a tutorial even when you are not up to that point; or again you may have finished the course and wish to

use a particular tutorial to go back over an idea you know you have found difficult. Remember also that you are welcome to attend any particular tutorial more than once - different sessions of the same tutorial may emphasise different aspects of the scheduled programme and will allow for some wide ranging over the issues in the course.

There are two tutorial activities for this course (pp.34 and 67). The two tutorials deal with some of the skills developed during the course, especially the use of primary historical materials, and the reading of literary texts.

Assessment

The assessment for Course HP02a consists of a two part item of some 2000 words written after completion of the course work. This assessment item is included in the course package.

It involves issues dealt with during the course. Although the texts to be read for the assessment will not have been met in the course work, the methods for working on them will have been demonstrated during the course. It is therefore worthwhile bearing the assessment item in mind from the beginning, so that when the time comes to complete it, you will have some ideas and useful notes to hand.

LIST OF READINGS

Readings are numbered in order of use, and aggregated according to the section of the study guide in which they first appear.

(Note: This list does not include readings from the purchased text books.)

Section 2 (pink cover)

Reading 1. Raymond Williams, 'Country and city' (excerpts)

Section 3 (cream cover)

Reading 2. Gerald Wilkes, 'The Australian Legend: some notes towards redefinition'

Reading 3. Graeme Davison, 'Sydney and the Bush: an urban context for the Australian Legend' (excerpts)

Reading 4. John Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend'

Section 4 (yellow cover)

Reading 5. Raymond Crawford, 'Aggressive Democracy, 1860-1900' (excerpt)

Section 5 (blue cover)

Reading 6. Richard Howitt, 'To the Daisy'

Reading 7. Charles Harpur, 'The Creek of the Four Graves'

Reading 8. The *Bulletin* (excerpts)

Reading 9. Bruce Nesbitt, 'Literary nationalism and the 1890s' (excerpts)

Reading 10. Ruth Teale, *Colonial Eve* (excerpts)

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND ITS STUDY OBJECTIVES

The first thing to say about this course is that it offers the chance to read some Australian literature. It is the first course so far in the Programme in which a major component of the work you do will consist of literary analysis; accordingly, there will be some discussion and demonstration of the principles and techniques involved in such analysis, and this should equip you for the relevant part of the Assessment Item (of which more later). However, it should be stressed that this is not simply a literature course, even though literary works figure quite prominently among its prescribed texts. Our interest in these works will be dictated throughout by our interest in the following question:

> How can we understand the relationship between 'literature' and 'history'?

This is obviously a very large question, and we shall not be exploring it in much depth in this course. However, it serves to indicate the kind of literary analysis we shall be engaging in: analysis which attempts to relate the production of literary works to other kinds of activity and other events in society generally. This will involve, among other things, an examination of some documents not usually thought of as 'literary' - extracts from newspaper articles, reports, letters, diaries and autobiographies - as well as literature proper. Such documents will enable us to raise and discuss, in fairly concrete terms, the question about literature and history we just posed; they will also bring to the fore, for some preliminary discussion, the question of historical evidence, and of the weight accorded to different kinds of document in the construction of scholarly arguments. This latter question will be taken up more fully and systematically in later courses.

These fairly general questions will be focussed on a specific debate which is current within the study of both Australian history and Australian literature, namely, the debate about the bush as an authentically 'Australian' image. You have already encountered some elements of this debate in Course HP01a, *Defining Australia*, in Richard White's discussion of the 'bushman' as an image of the 'true' Australian which gained wide currency in the 1890s, particularly in the pages of the *Bulletin*. The present course continues our earlier concern with the search for national identity, but narrows the historical focus to the later decades of the nineteenth century, a period which has been seen as crucially important in the development of Australian self-consciousness.

This course somewhat resembles Course HP01a in that the study guide and readings revolve around a central, book-length set text, in this case Russel Ward's classic account of the development of the 'bush ideal' in Australia through the nineteenth century, *The Australian Legend*. Our

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treatment of Ward's book, however, will be rather more analytical and questioning than the relatively straightforward use made of Richard White's book in the earlier course. Indeed, despite its apparent centrality in this course, Russel Ward's account represents just one side - perhaps the weaker one, certainly the less fashionable one at the moment - of the ongoing debate about the importance of the bush in Australian society and culture.

The course begins with a section explaining and exemplifying some of the key terms and conceptual oppositions we shall be using in our investigation of the bush image - or 'legend', as Ward and others have called it. The section following (section 3) will deal quite directly with the debate over the 'Ward thesis', presenting Ward's own arguments together with a selection of those of his critics and opponents in the fields of historical and literary studies. This will be followed by two sections in which we shall work through a selection of historical documents and literary texts showing how each can be related to Australia's achievement of a degree of national independence by the end of the nineteenth century. The purpose of these two sections will be to develop some elementary skills in the analysis of documents and the use of evidence, but the substantive theme of the 'bush legend' will remain very much to the fore. The final section will be a somewhat more concentrated exercise in addressing a specific question - that of women's role in the bush - in terms of the kinds of documentary and literary evidence available, using some of the skills developed earlier to analyse it.

Finally, we hope that the course will demonstrate that behind generalisations about national identity, both in the nineteenth century and now, there lie important shades and differences of opinion and interest that careful study can begin to illuminate.

Our particular concern is with the 1890s, the period perhaps most often discussed and argued over by historians and social commentators (not to mention literary critics). Many of the national qualities attributed to Australians are first celebrated in the writings of this period and therefore the texts you will be reading have exerted an influence on the way in which contemporary society sees itself. (Consider the success of the film *The Man from Snowy River*: the enormous audience response revealed that Australians are attracted strongly to heroic images from Australia's equivalent of the Wild West.)

We have selected the period of Australian literary writing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century for particular study because a tradition has been established which sees this period, and the decade of the 1890s above all, as being of critical importance in forming the notion by Australians of what sort of people they were and what sort of country they lived in. It was then, at least in the

terms of this tradition, that many of the stereotypes of 'what it is to be really Australian' allegedly were formed.

Literary terminology

Some of the terminology of literary criticism will be important as you meet the selected items of literature. However, you are not expected to become experts in literary criticism during your work in this course. You are asked to read the works not so much to detect literary 'merit', but to understand the sort of writing that was popular (i.e., published in magazines and journals with a comparatively large circulation or in collections with a sizeable audience) during the relevant period (roughly 1870 to 1900) and to gain an appreciation of the part these works played in debates on the nation's present and its future.

For your reference we have included at the back of this study guide a glossary of some of the literary terms you will encounter. Terms defined in the glossary are italicised in the text and marked with an asterisk.

2 DEFINING THE ARGUMENT: SOME KEY TERMS AND OPPOSITIONS

As our discussion proceeds, certain terms and concepts will become important as instruments for mapping out the field of knowledge covered by this course. Rather than explaining them as and when they first occur, it seemed, on the whole, more useful to make some comments on them at the beginning, in order to indicate straight away the theoretical parameters of the course, and to allow for some fairly free-ranging and generalised discussion without interrupting the development of more particular literary and historical themes in later sections.

2.1 Myths and legends

Discussions of intangible concepts such as 'national identity' and 'national character' often make use of the terms myth and legend. Russel Ward's book, *The Australian Legend*, is an obvious case in point. The problem is that although they can be very useful terms, their usefulness often consists (as perhaps it does for Ward) in their slipperiness and ambiguity, rather than in any real precision of meaning. As we shall see in a moment, part of the debate over the 'Ward thesis' has had to do with his use of the term 'legend', and Ward's own replies to critics of his work have sometimes taken the form of careful definitions and re-definitions of the term to suit his argumentative purposes.

Consulting a dictionary for help in these matters is usually interesting and sometimes illuminating. You will find that most dictionaries make no consistent distinction between the dominant contemporary meanings of the two words 'myth' and 'legend'. There are fairly clear differences between subordinate meanings of each word, and also between their historical developments: for example, 'legend' used to mean something that ought to be read, an exemplary tale such as a saint's life (from the Latin 'legendum' - 'requiring to be read'), a meaning that survives in the 'legend' on a map. But as far as current usage is concerned, the two words are virtually synonymous. Both denote a story, which has some special significance for the society that produced it, and which may be regarded as either true or untrue. In other words, we can, and often do, refer to a story as either 'mythical' or 'legendary' when we simply mean it is untrue, a lie. This is probably the most common contemporary meaning for both terms. On the other hand, there is a usage of both words in which the truth of the story is taken for granted, and the emphasis of the adjectives 'mythic(al)' and 'legendary' is on the story's communal significance - whether fully religious or more loosely explanatory of certain aspects of that particular community.

Since 'legend' rather than 'myth' is the term most often used by Ward and his critics, it should be added that there

is some warranty for differentiating legend from myth as being more 'factual': it has been suggested, for example, that legends have human beings as their main actors whereas myths are enacted by gods. A representative version of this distinction is as follows:

> Legend: A narrative or tradition handed down from the past. A legend is distinguished from a myth in that the legend has more of historical truth and perhaps less of the supernatural. Legends often indicate the lore of a people, and, in this way, serve as at least partial expressions of the racial or national spirit. (Holman, 1980, p. 243).

There is some doubt as to whether this distinction, plausible as it seems, has ever had any real currency in English. There is, however, a particular usage of 'legend' which is current nowadays, and which is clearly relevant to our concern with 'national character' and its human embodiments. This is the way in which we refer to a real, even a living, person, as 'a legend' - often 'in his/her own time'; perhaps the frequent addition alerts us to a quality of pastness more characteristic of legend than of myth. In any case, the application of 'legend' to persons certainly represents an extension from its more basic application to stories, and the meaning intended in calling such persons 'legends' is clearly to indicate a 'story-like' quality in them. But they are story-like not in the sense of being untrue, but in the sense of being larger than life.

With this last connotation of 'legend', we perhaps come closest to the meaning intended by the proponents of an Australian 'bush legend', though it is clear that yet a further extension of meaning is required before one can speak not only of persons, but also of a whole way of life as legendary, as Ward and his disciples have sought to do in respect of a certain community of the bush.

Perhaps, however, we should avoid any definite conclusions as to which of these graduated meanings may be most useful for understanding the debate in question until we have read part of Ward's own discussion and subsequent defence of his terminology.

****

Read Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*:

(a) Foreword, paragraphs 1-2 (p.v)

(b) Chapter 1, paragraphs 1-5 (pp.1-2)

(c) Foreword to the Second Edition (pp.vi-viii)

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Even though we have not, at this stage, familiarised ourselves fully with the content of Ward's thesis, it is

possible to make some observations, and to ask some questions, about his use of the concept 'legend' and its various derivatives and equivalents. See if you can answer the following questions:

SAQ 1

1. Concentrating on items (a) and (c) in the reading, name two single-word synonyms for 'legend' that Ward uses.

2. Of the various connotations of 'legend' which we discussed prior to the reading, which ones seem to approximate most closely to what Ward has in mind?

3. Concentrating on items (b) and (c), explain, in no more than 40 words, the distinction Ward draws between the 'typical' and the 'average' Australian.

2.2 Texts and contexts

A pair of terms that you will encounter whenever 'literature' - that is, novels, short stories, poems, plays - is being discussed is 'text' and 'context'. Usually, in discussions which seek to relate literature to history, the literary work is regarded as a 'text', which is then placed within the 'context' of a particular historical milieu. We would do well to remember, however, that the 'context' we construct in this way, the historical milieu of people, actions, events and ideas, is itself derived to a very large extent from written sources of various kinds - letters, speeches, reports and the like - and these may just as reasonably be regarded as 'texts' in their own right. There is nothing inherently 'contextual' about such materials, just as there is nothing inherently 'textual' about literary works. Or to put it another way, instead of looking to historical documents for contextual information with which to understand literary texts, we can look to literary writings for information with which to illuminate some aspect of a historical document such as an editorial or a piece of reporting.

In this course we shall, in fact, be following the conventional practice for the most part; that is, we shall be treating literary works - poems and short stories - as objects for analysis and interpretation - texts - and using historical documents to construct a context in which to place them. But it is worthwhile our being aware that this ordering is not the only possible one, if only because it alerts us to the existence of different ways of reading written materials. If we read a given piece of writing as part of a context, for example, we are likely to pay much more attention to its factual, informational content than to

any complexities in style or presentation it may possess. Conversely, if we read something as a text (especially a literary text) we are likely to be more interested in how it works as language, and less interested in the factual information we might otherwise extract from it.

When we consider the 'literary' writing to be found in many of the historical documents of the period, and the wealth of factual historical reportage contained in much of the literature - Lawson's short stories, for example - it becomes clear that both ways of reading literary and non-literary writing are eminently possible: the more so when we remember that the same individuals often produced both kinds of writing in the late nineteenth century.

This leads fairly directly to consideration of a further conceptual opposition, closely related to the one we have been discussing, but with particular application to the reading of literature.

2.3 Literature as reflection versus literature as production

An important consideration governing our study of literary materials in this course will be the possibility of regarding, and reading, literature both as a reflection or expression of some prior experience and as the means for producing certain effects.

What does this distinction mean, and how is it relevant to the concerns of the course? There are at least two reasons, the first one relating directly to the course, the second of a more general nature:

1. In the debate over the development of a 'bush legend', we shall find that, generally speaking, those who have argued for the centrality of the bush experience in Australian life have tended to regard the literary works cited in evidence as reflections of a real social experience of the bush. On the other hand, we shall find that those who have wished to question or at least to circumscribe the importance of the bush theme in Australian writing have tended to regard their literary evidence from the viewpoint of what effects the works have produced - in this case, an ideal image of the bush life, not directly reflecting any real bush experiences.

2. Definite consequences follow from the decision to treat a literary work not in terms of what it might reflect and express, but in terms of the effects it has produced and the uses to which it has been put. For instance, rather than searching behind the work for details of the author's life and experience, attention will focus on such matters as how it has been used in social and political debates, or on how and for what period of time it has appeared in school curricula.

You do not have to decide the merits of these two ways of treating a literary work (as reflective or productive) in this course. Nor, for that matter, are they mutually exclusive. And you will certainly recognise that elements of both approaches are adopted in our work on the Australian bush legend.

There is a further aspect to the 'reflection/production' opposition which we can consider very generally at this stage by re-introducing the notion of texts and contexts. Briefly, you should not assume that any 'contextual' reading of a text, that is, any reading that takes account of the circumstances of its original production, is necessarily a 'reflectionist' reading. A reflectionist reading is one which finds elements of a context (e.g. bush society) directly represented in the text (e.g. bush literature) - this is one kind of contextual reading. But it is quite possible to envisage another kind of contextual reading which finds an indirect, but nonetheless real connection between the elements of a particular social context (e.g. the conditions of life in the city) and certain textual elements (e.g. ideal images of the bush). We shall, in fact, be looking at one such interpretation in an article by Graeme Davison (reading 3) - a contextual interpretation of bush literature, which is nonetheless not reflectionist in the sense in which we shall be using that term. Such indirectly contextual readings combine very easily with a productivist interest in textual effects.

2.4 Indigenous culture versus imported culture

You will recall in Course HP01a, *Defining Australia*, a substantial discussion of the question of indigenous culture, as presented by Richard White in his book, *Inventing Australia*.

In this course, *The Bush Legend*, we shall take the question somewhat further and in a more specialised way by focussing on the history of Australian literature in the late nineteenth century. In order to do this, however, it is worth considering for a moment the terms within which discussions about an indigenous culture tend to be organised.

For our purposes, it is sufficient to exemplify such terms by the opposition between an indigenous culture and one that is imported. This opposition adequately embraces discussions of the desirability and the possibility of identifying an indigenous culture, and of whether such a culture is to be recovered from some already existing source or, on the contrary, is yet to be developed and established. In discussions on these several contentious issues, the indigenous Australian culture is usually contrasted with the less appropriate and less vital culture of a distant (and perhaps degenerate) Europe.

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Given our concern with literary developments in Australia, it might seem that in setting the discussion in terms of an opposition between culture that is 'indigenous' and culture that is 'imported', we are leaning too heavily on an economic metaphor, as though we were discussing shipments of primary produce or transportations of people. Nevertheless, the notion of importing literary forms and models is applicable. Indeed, in a broader sense it would apply not only to questions of late nineteenth-century literary writing but also to late twentieth-century issues such as the degree of local content in Australian television production and broadcasting, or of statutory protection for an Australian film industry against foreign imports that would flood the local market.

Here, of course, matters of policy decisions at government level are involved; this was scarcely the case with the work of individual nineteenth century writers concerned with their relation (and that of literature in a more general sense) to a certain experience of the bush.

In both cases, however, what is involved is the reliance of Australian cultural productions on the styles and conventions of foreign products. Thus despite the important historical difference between the present issue of local content in Australian film and television production and the nineteenth century literature on the experience of the bush, the problem of imported goods can be seen as a continuing theme in discussions of Australian cultural development. At their crudest, such discussions have set up an absolute opposition between what is imported or foreign and what is indigenous or home grown, as if these categories were mutually exclusive. This sort of over-simplification ends up by opposing a generalised and uniform Australian 'us' and an equally generalised and uniform foreign 'them'. This massive opposition then obscures the many differences that exist within the Australian scene, for example between the city and the country ('Sydney and the Bush'), or even within each one itself. Indeed, it would allow no room for distinguishing between such different indigenous producers or 'home growers' as city or country journalists, writers of lyrics and writers of satirical dramas, Sydney and Melbourne and Brisbane reviewers (and further sub-categories of reviewers in these and other cities).

If it is so crude, how has such an opposition been so powerful, at least at certain moments in history and in certain political and cultural debates? The answer is not mysterious. For the sake of political solidarity, or for the cause of moral purity, nationalist enthusiasms and hopes exercised their influences on writers of the nineteenth century, particularly on those drawn by the dream of a truly indigenous Australian culture. But even when the wish to see the realisation of the dream was at a peak and the possibility of a literature that could be distinguished from a British parent tradition seemed to be at hand, there were still differences among those who stood for the desire for an Australian culture.

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These differences remain of central interest. But we should not forget, however divided those opinions might have been, that those in dispute shared considerable common ground. If at times we seem to stress the differences rather than the shared beliefs, it is because there are reasons to doubt that the shift from 'imported' to 'indigenous', from colonial to non-colonial, is ever a simple, single shift from one social system (the English) to another (the Australian).

We can illustrate some of the differences possible within the one broadly 'nationalist' viewpoint by looking at two pieces of Australian writing, one an essay by Henry Lawson, the other a poem by Victor Daley, in each of which the problems of 'indigenous' cultural production form the central *theme**. Both pieces were written in the 1890s and together they give some indication of what were perceived as important issues at that time. However, our primary concern with the themes of this writing, as distinct from its form, should not prevent us from attending carefully to the ways in which the very different formal features of the two pieces relate to the argument each advances.

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Read the Editor's Note (pp.2-3) and the first two pieces in the Leon Cantrell anthology, Henry Lawson's essay '"Pursuing Literature" in Australia' (pp.4-12) and Victor Daley's poem 'When London Calls' (pp.13-14).

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The Lawson piece is an essay, made up almost entirely of personal reminiscences and reflection on experience written in a colloquial *style**; the Daley piece is a rather formally constructed poem, full of learned *allusions** ('Charon's fare', 'Tarpeian gift' etc.) and generalised figures ('the sage', 'the bard', 'the painter young'). It makes no pretence of producing the effects of intimate personal address and 'truth to experience' that the Lawson essay achieves. But despite these differences of literary strategy, it is of interest to note that the two pieces are addressing not only the same general issue of an indigenous national culture but also, within this, the same particular problem of the expatriation of indigenous writers, that is, the development of what we might now call a cultural 'brain-drain' from Australia to England. Each piece can be regarded as a protest against this damaging tendency, based on some degree of analysis of the problem.

In the Lawson essay, for example, you should notice that in placing on view his own experience as a writer in Australia - his own experience, that is, of unfair and discriminatory treatment by the agents of colonial (i.e., 'imported') culture, such as the 'wealthy Australasian weeklies and dailies' (p.11) - Lawson manages to convey an explanation of the phenomenon of literary expatriation from

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the point of view of the indigenous writer. Using himself as the example, he is able to demonstrate that the most ardently nationalist writer cannot survive in Australia under conditions which so disadvantage him in comparison with the representatives and purveyors of 'imported' or English culture.

It is important to be aware, however, that for all its apparent 'naturalness', this essay is far from simple in its way of working. One way of recognising this is by considering the various *rhetorical effects** of the 'autobiographical' mode and the personal *form of address** adopted here. There are at least two such effects:

1. It makes it possible to conceal the main polemical thrust of the essay until a very late stage. In other words, the *narrative** of personal experiences is presented as just that until, from near the top of p.11 or thereabouts ('There are, perhaps, a score of Australian writers...'), the string of 'hard luck' stories begins to focus on a particular target: the ill-treatment of Australian writers by Australia. And the protest, which becomes more explicit and emotionally intense from here on, has a greater moral force than it would otherwise have because the seven pages of personal experience (while providing 'ammunition' for later polemical use) have served to establish the speaker - the (first person) 'I' of the essay - as an honest, down-to-earth Australian, not afraid of hard work, able to turn his hand to most things, and not inclined to whinge. You can test the effectiveness of this strategy by re-reading the last five paragraphs of the essay by themselves. The somewhat hysterical self-justifying and self-pitying effect is, we think you'll agree, very different and much less persuasive than on your first reading, when these paragraphs are encountered only after the speaker's personal credentials have been established.

2. A second effect of the autobiographical mode is that it enables Lawson to handle (not necessarily solve) the problem of who should be held responsible for the conditions he complains of. The first-person narrative of 'experience' encourages a distinction, in principle, between people the narrator meets and can put to the test of personal impression, and those he merely knows about - 'faceless bureaucrats' and the like - but doesn't confront. Roughly speaking, this is the line along which blame is divided in the essay: the Australians with whom the narrator has worked and lived are the 'true' Australians who fuel his nationalist enthusiasm and who value indigenous writers; the others, the 'false' Australians, are those who seek to preserve colonial ties and import a derivative English culture - they include the refusers of rail-passes, the editors of big newspapers, people outside the narrator's immediate sphere of experience.

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Clearly such an analysis - if it were made explicit - would constitute a major oversimplification of both sides of 'imported/indigenous' opposition. The fact that it is not explicit, but only implicit in the way of telling, makes it less open to scrutiny. Indeed, the parenthetical comments on the '*Western Mail* people - who by the way didn't treat me so badly', (p.10) and on the *Sunday Times* (p.11), makes the implicit analysis even less accessible to rational examination. It is finally the absence in the essay of any alternative (i.e., political) way of understanding the difference between the Australia which attracts nationalist writers' fervour and the Australia that denies a living to those same writers, that gives the simplistic explanation in terms of 'people I know' versus 'people I don't know' a certain hidden authority. (You might wish to compare this effect of the 'autobiographical mode' with certain contemporary forms of political rhetoric.)

What these few analytical comments have been trying to demonstrate is that an apparently simple and natural way of writing can be seen to have quite subtle and complex effects once it is examined from the point of view of how it works upon the reader to promote a certain argument. This is not to suggest that Lawson is being consciously hypocritical, making a pretence of spontaneity and forthrightness while cynically setting out to manipulate his readers. It is rather that he elects to use the whole set of writing *conventions** - those of the personal essay with its chatty (or 'yarning') speaker who is very free with anecdotes and opinions - rather than another set, in order to present his argument about the plight of Australian writers most persuasively. As we shall see, other writers presented the same argument quite differently.

Victor Daley's poem wrenches us violently from one set of literary conventions - those of the Lawson essay - to another very different set (an indication, among other things, of the stylistic diversity of the 1890s). You should resist any inclination to dismiss this poem as 'stilted' and 'abstract'. It deserves consideration on its own terms, which are not those of the Lawson essay. The few comments which follow are intended to make this possible.

Like the Lawson essay, this poem is about literary expatriation, but whereas the essay looks at the problem from the viewpoint of the individual colonial writer who is attracted - or driven - to England, the poem attempts what is in some ways a more difficult task, to represent that same phenomenon as the large, general and impersonal process which in one sense it undoubtedly is. In other words, Daley's analysis of the problem, unlike Lawson's, concentrates on the structural rather than the personal dimension of literary expatriation.

All this may seem somewhat remote from the surface of the poem, which is entirely given over to the description of

London as a gigantic and grotesque female figure sitting beside the Thames and luring the bearers of culture from all over the world to their death. The *image** of the woman is, of course, a mythic image, by which we mean, in part, that it evokes a number of associations and parallels with figures from particular mythological systems. The image is mythic also in the sense that, like all myths, it demands *interpretation** if it is to yield its full meaning.

Perhaps the most obvious interpretation would be that the image suggests, by means of a rhetorical exaggeration (or 'hyperbole'), the destructive effect of British imperialism on colonial cultures generally. This is a tricky question, since it is not the simpler, more brutal process of direct penetration of pre-existing cultures (in Australia's case, that of the Aborigines) that Daley has in mind, but rather the complex, but in a sense no less exploitative process by which English culture is first 'exported' to the outposts of Empire, allowed to flourish for a time, then reclaimed or 'harvested' by a metropolis insatiable for cultural wealth and novelty. The underlying parallel with the economic processes of imperialism - the export of capital and the 'repatriation' of accumulated profits - is most marked, and comes closest to the surface of the poem in the first four *stanzas*,* where the female figure appears as a kind of baleful and ageing Britannia. (Britannia - as in 'Rule, Britannia' - had been a popular idealisation of British imperial power, always in the form of a beautiful young woman, for about two hundred years at the time the poem was written.)

In the succeeding stanzas (5-8) the *connotations** of the image change subtly. The woman becomes less an empress, and more a temptress, vaguely reminiscent of a range of mythological females from the English literary tradition who prey on the youth and vitality of others - Circe, Keats's 'belle dame sans merci', Coleridge's Geraldine, Rider Haggard's 'She', and a host of other vampires and succubi (female demons). Interpreting this aspect of the image, we could say that it represents the one-sided nature of cultural 'exchange' in a colonial-motherland relationship, the overwhelming dominance by the colonising power of consumption (and here this includes consumption of the cultural wealth produced in the colonies, in the same way as meat, wool and other primary commodities are consumed) over production. [Note: The Anakim were an ancient tribe of giants mentioned in the Old Testament.]

After the eighth stanza, the image slightly changes its emphasis again. You can explore this change for yourselves, bearing in mind the importance of elaborating the connotations of the image in its own right before interpreting its meaning in terms of the 'colonial' theme. In other words, one should try to be as specific as possible about the range of associations the image calls forth before you assign them an *allegorical** significance on another level. You might like to try your hand at this by fitting

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some particular parts of the poem into the general interpretation being developed.

SAQ 2

Look at the tenth and thirteenth stanzas of the poem. How would you interpret their meaning in the light of the discussion so far?

[Note: The Tarpeian Rock was a high crag just outside Rome from which, in ancient times, criminals were thrown to their deaths.]

We shall not be spending quite as much time on individual pieces of literature in the rest of this course as we have here, since we are aiming at a certain breadth of coverage within the decade of the 1890s. However, it is worth keeping in mind that such analysis is always possible, and very frequently useful in revealing the complexities of the relations between texts and contexts. It is clear, for example, that without some understanding of the rhetorical and poetic devices being used in these two pieces it would scarcely be possible to appreciate them either as reflections of experience or as mechanisms for producing certain effects.

2.5 Country versus city

It is not difficult to see how a correlation might be established between the opposition of indigenous and imported culture on the one hand, and country and city culture on the other. Many writers of the 1890s were keen to establish exactly that correlation, and a number of later commentators on the period have agreed with them. It is important to recognise, however, that the two sets of opposing terms do not have a relationship of simple correspondence in Australian cultural history: city culture has never been a pure European import any more than bush (or country) culture has ever really been free of European and other components. But it is not difficult to see how and why the correlation has so often been made and accepted.

If the imported culture is seen as coming from a parent Britain, and Britain is identified with the metropolitan influence exerted by the great city of London, then by crude and simple opposition the indigenous Australian culture becomes identified with the life and people of the bush. This opposition can then be invested with a moral force: the imported culture is seen as that of the 'city' (i.e., civilised, cultured, metropolitan, industrialised, crowded, corrupt, etc.) and the indigenous culture is seen as deriving from the opposite 'country' values (i.e., it is natural, pastoral, innocent, unsophisticated, etc.).

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The opposition of city and country is not restricted to discussions of Australian cultural development. On the contrary, it has had an extensive and varied intellectual history, figuring in many different debates. To avoid over-generalisations, however, it is important to distinguish between the use of the contrast of city and country in English debates and its use in debates concerning Australian culture. Even within Australian contexts the contrast may have different meanings according to the circumstances, e.g. city/country might mean Sydney/Brisbane or Sydney/Nimbin or Brisbane/Birdsville. In both British and Australian cases the opposition of city and country has given rise to passionate political and moral commitments, for example the soldier settlement movement - 'a farm for every hero' - of the 1920s or even the retreat to the idyllic bush of the hippy movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which was contrasted with the developers' view of big cities as the measure of the nation's success.

A full discussion of the 'city' and 'country' opposition in its Australian application would involve a variety of factors, ranging from the impact and currency of particular forms of European literary tradition to local Australian political, economic and social debates, including the debate on whether there was, or should be, an indigenous Australian culture and an Australian literature wholly distinct from any British parent tradition.

Although our concern is with the particular forms of the opposition that emerged in the literary projects of late nineteenth-century Australia, a more general way into the discussion is provided by Raymond Williams in his study of *The Country and the City*. Before proceeding to the excerpts from this work (reading 1), it is worth noting Williams's reminder of the need for precision in using the terms of the opposition: the following paragraph is taken from reading 1.

> Clearly ideas of the country and the city have specific contents and histories, but just as clearly, at times, they are forms of isolation and identification of more general processes. People have often said 'the city' when they meant capitalism or bureaucracy or centralized power, while 'the country' as we have seen, has at times meant everything from independence to deprivation, and from the powers of an active imagination to a form of release from consciousness. At every point we need to put these ideas to the historical realities: at times to be confirmed, at times denied.

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A NOTE ON RAYMOND WILLIAMS

Raymond Williams started his academic career as a literary critic of a left-wing persuasion. At first his work involved seeking the authentic roots of the tradition of British writing and the forms in which this tradition had been continued in more recent literature. However, Williams's position was not marked by an elitist concern to preserve traditional values against what were seen as dehumanising forces in modern society. The progression of Williams's work may be seen in the context of his gradual movement towards Marxism, a movement which culminated in his book, *Marxism and Literature* (1977). Literature is discussed not as the free invention of individuals but as the expression or reflection of social relations, as these are experienced by individual writers. In his latest book, *Culture* (1981), the particular issue of literary works tends to merge into the broader category of 'culture', which is depicted as a product of competing socio-economic forces.

You may find Williams's writing difficult. If you are used to thinking of academic writing as being ordered in paragraphs with 'topic sentences', this will seem unfamiliar. His paragraphs sometimes contain a logical development, or sometimes consist of examples which carry his argument: you will probably find that the more active your relationship with this reading, the more of it you will comprehend. For this purpose, try to underline one sentence (or less) in each paragraph. This will not necessarily be a 'topic' sentence, i.e., one that sums up the whole paragraph, but it will probably be one which contains a major idea or a step in the argument that is important or an example that makes a particular idea clear. There are no necessary right answers here. You are doing two things for yourself: you are assimilating each paragraph to the point where you feel that one idea can be identified for you as the most important, and you are providing beacons for yourself, so that you can go back over the reading fairly easily and grasp it as a whole.

You will also note that Williams is sometimes very personal and impressionistic (perhaps he's conscious of his own status as a novelist). Like Henry Lawson, he does not hesitate to employ, as a confirming device, references to his own personal experience.

This excerpt is made even more difficult than it would otherwise be precisely because it is an excerpt, or rather two excerpts cobbled together (as the page numbers indicate) from the beginning and end of a fairly long book. This means that the last few pages, in particular, are bristling with ideas which have in fact been developed more fully, and

with copious literary examples, earlier in the book. This is a problem, but an unavoidable one. If you find Williams's ideas interesting, you should certainly make an attempt to read the book *The Country and the City* in its entirety, or perhaps arrange to view the whole 60-minute videotape of the TV documentary.

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Read Raymond Williams, 'Country and city' (excerpts), reading 1 and then complete the following exercise.

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SAQ 3

Write down a list of contrasting terms to show some of the connotations acquired by the 'city' and the 'country' when these are taken to refer not to specific places but to opposed ideas or forms of life.

What should you have established from reading Williams's discussion of the opposition between city and country? At the most general level, you should know something by now of the extensive intellectual history of an opposition which has proved extremely durable where certain traditional beliefs and associations are concerned. It remains to be seen just how applicable this history is to the Australian situation. Is the traditional Australian opposition 'Sydney or the Bush' similar in its implications to any of the 'country/city' oppositions Williams mentions. If it were not, it would hardly damage Williams's argument, since surely his central contention is the variability of the opposition in different cultures and at different times. What is constant, he suggests, is the social function of the opposition - the fact that it provides people with a way of thinking about the often threatening fact of social change.

Perhaps the most interesting and provocative idea in the reading is the one contained in the second last paragraph. Here Williams suggests that the country/city opposition in contemporary Western society functions as a way of diverting consciousness away from the important choices to be made in the present towards nostalgic images of the past and fantasies of the future. You might like to consider how this suggestion might apply to some contemporary issues in Australian society - uranium and the environment, for example.

3 THE 'AUSTRALIAN LEGEND' DEBATE

In this section of the course we shall be concerned exclusively with the long-standing debate within literary and historical studies over the importance of the bush in Australian culture and consciousness. As we have already noted, this debate has tended to focus on Russel Ward's book *The Australian Legend*; indeed the debate can fairly be represented as consisting of challenges to Ward's central thesis and defences of it by both Ward and others, though this view of the debate somewhat exaggerates, by implication, the originality of Ward's position, which is in many respects merely a synthesis and elaboration of a whole earlier tradition of 'nationalist' cultural history. Nonetheless, we shall certainly need to restrict ourselves here to the 'Ward debate' proper, and indeed to a selection only of the contributions to that debate.

You should, if at all possible, read the Ward book in its entirety. However you should realise the necessity to be economical with your time and effort, and this means you should read some parts of the book with greater care and attention than other parts. The reading assignments from Ward which are given below should be regarded as a necessary minimum. The chapters which are not specifically mentioned, namely chapters 2, 3, 6 and 9, should certainly be 'skim-read' in spare moments. Some of them will be more fully dealt with in later courses, at which time you will, of course, need to re-read them more carefully. To give you a rough preliminary overview of Ward's argument there are many published summaries that could be used. The following paragraph from Rob Pascoe's 1979 study *The Manufacture of Australian History* will serve our present purpose:

> *The Australian Legend* contains an argument which advances in four stages. Firstly, Ward argues that there is something identifiably 'Australian', a proletarian 'mystique', which is described in the opening pages. Secondly, this mystique evolved out of bush life, especially out of the conditions of labour and leisure of the nineteenth-century nomadic bushmen: the drovers, shepherds, shearers, bullock-drivers and others in the pastoral industry. Thirdly, this set of values was transferred to city people by osmosis, especially through the fiction of popular writers such as Lawson and Furphy. Finally, the advent of socialist ideas in Australia after about 1880 was accepted by these men quite quickly, since mateship - an integral part of the mystique - was a 'natural socialist ethos', and this led to the mushroom growth of bush unionism. (Pascoe, 1979, pp.52-53)

For our work, the second and third of the stages in Ward's argument are the most important, proposing as they do:

a. the notion that the bush myth (or 'mystique') grew out of the material experience of 'labour and leisure' in the bush; and

b. the explanation that the values of the bush myth were transferred to the city by 'osmosis' (i.e., through the medium of literature which acted as a vehicle for the transmission of these pre-existing values).

These two propositions suggest the possibility of centring the debate around two main issues, the first of which concerns Ward's claims about conditions of life and work in the bush, and the distinctive 'ethos' they produced; this can perhaps be thought of as a primarily historical issue, inasmuch as the arguments focus on what certain documents can tell us about a particular social context. The second issue concerns his claims about the literature of the 1890s and its relation to the bush ethos; this can perhaps be thought of as a primarily literary issue, inasmuch as the arguments revolve around different theories as to the origins and effects of certain textual phenomena. Or, to put it very simply, the former (historical) issue has to do with the social context, whereas the latter (literary) has to do with the texts. This is not intended to suggest that historical and literary issues can be neatly compartmentalised; on the contrary, they frequently overlap considerably. But there are undoubtedly differences of emphasis and focus, and these enable us to conduct our discussion in separate stages.

3.1 The Ward thesis and Australian history

We have already looked at the first two pages of Ward's first chapter when considering the rather problematical object of his investigation: a national legend. We shall now leave that set of problems in abeyance and focus instead on Ward's account of the material and social basis of the Bush legend.

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Read Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, chapter 1, 'The Legend and the Task' (pp.1-14), and then complete the exercise on the next page.

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EXERCISE

Ward summarises the qualities and outlook of the 'typical Australian' in the long paragraph at the top of p.2. Carefully read this passage and write notes (50 words) concerning, firstly, whether each of the characteristics listed by Ward (and attributed by him to the nineteenth-century pastoral worker) may still be found among most urban Australians in the 1980s. Secondly, consider whether there is much difference between (a) the 'average' characteristics you can observe among your own friends and neighbours, and (b) the 'typical' images of Australian character found in modern Australian television comedies (e.g. Paul Hogan, Norman Gunston, the series *Kingswood Country*) or recent films (e.g. *The Man From Snowy River*, *Gallipoli*, *The Bush Christmas*).

Some historians have been happy to defend Ward's list of 'typical' Australian qualities. For example, John Barrett makes the following comment:

> Such qualities can be ascribed to a wide section of Australians. These have been, and are, characteristic Australian qualities. One of the best illustrations of this is the image of the Australian soldier. Every one of those listed qualities fits the digger tradition like a glove. (Barrett, October 1973, p.2)

Certainly we could find many writers who, like Barrett, have claimed to see a close link between the bush myth and the Anzac myth of the period after 1915. The continuity is visible through notions of mateship, practical skills and courage on the one hand, and, perhaps, through notions of nationalism and patriotism on the other hand. Ward himself notes this continuity, but only in passing. (Read the last 4 pages of chapter 8; Ward does not attempt to describe twentieth-century developments of the bush legend.) You will be aware, from reading Richard White's book *Inventing Australia* in Course HP01a, *Defining Australia*, that images of Australian identity since World War I have undergone a number of significant changes, some of which will be reconsidered later in relation to urban Australia.

In the meantime, let us return to Ward's account of how the legend was formed and transmitted, in chapter 1 of his book.

SAQ 4

Read pp.2-5, 10-13, and note down key sentences which help to demonstrate Ward's view of the origins and growth of the 'bush myth' and his main types of evidence.

In your answer to the above exercise, you will have noted at least some of the following points, though probably not in this order. Re-read the relevant passages in Ward's book as you check through this list. (Some additional page references to later chapters are also included for your interest.)

1. 'Convicts and ex-convicts' were the first and most influential bush workers; their previous lives had tended to foster attitudes similar to those found among bush workers (pp.2, 11).

2. The social class of the bush workers was definitely lower class; they are described as 'an itinerant rural proletariat' (p.10) and a 'pastoral proletariat' (p.12).

3. Thus, the directions of cultural influence were 'upwards from the lowest strata of society and outwards from the interior' (p.13). (You will find later that similar points are made on pp.61, 68.)

4. The main features of 'Australian' character were already present by 1851 (p.11). (See also p.180.)

5. The pastoral workers were a cohesive and self-conscious group (p.2) with a unique ethos or outlook (p.11).

6. There was considerable social mixing between bush and town (pp.3, 12) but the prestige and cultural influence of the bushman was greater than that of the townsman (p.5).

7. Women were scarce in the outback; the bush ethos was overwhelmingly 'masculine' (p.10). (See also pp.94-100, 121.)

8. The economic, geographical and climatic conditions of the outback tended to evoke the qualities typified in the pastoral worker (pp.2,11). In other words, environmental conditions (socio-economic, geographical) were a formative influence on attitudes and behaviour.

9. Newcomers to the outback had to adapt to the harsh geographical environment and unusual social conditions. In their struggle to assimilate, they absorbed the bush ethos (p.11). (See also pp.115, 140).

10. There was less social conflict between pastoral workers and their employers than between these two groups and absentee landowners or city bankers; the rural employers tended to respect and even adopt aspects of the bush ethos (pp.4-5).

11. The early development of the bush ethos was more clearly reflected in folklore and popular speech than in 'formal literature' (p.13).

12. From the 1880s, however, the trade union movement and the popular journals began to promote the bush ethos as a self-conscious element of nationalism (p.13).

13. This occurred despite the fact that the real pastoral workers were beginning to lose their distinctive qualities as a social group, as a result of improved communications and public education (p.13).

This list contains a large range of claims concerning the origins and growth of a distinctive bush ethos. Some points are statements about social groups (nos. 2, 7, 10); others are statements about the importance of certain factors in forming and spreading a set of attitudes (nos.1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12). All are dependent on various forms of evidence about attitudes and their social context. Ward claims (no. 11) that the key evidence concerning the early development of the bush ethos is found most clearly in 'popular culture' rather than in the traditional 'high culture' of the educated elites. This explains Ward's special concern with ballads, stories, travellers' impressions, and other informal sources of evidence (see his Bibliography, especially sections Id and III, pp.264-71, 275).

Ward's first chapter is a key one because it contains his whole argument in a skeletal form. His fourth chapter, your next reading assignment, is important because it draws together the detailed accounts of convict, Irish and native-born ('Currency') influences given in chapters 2 and 3, and shows their convergence 'beyond the Great Divide', where the particular conditions of life were such that a new and distinctive ethos emerged. Thus, while the chapter provides a lot of detailed information about the social and physical conditions of the outback, it also completes the first, pre-Gold Rush phase in the development of the bush legend.

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Read Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, chapter 4, 'Up the Country' (pp.71-111).

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SAQ 5

How does Ward relate the following features of life in the bush to the formation of a distinctive 'bush' ethos?

1. the kinds of labour available (What were they?)

2. the shortage of clergy

3. the shortage of women

3.2 Historical critiques of Ward

There have been a number of critiques of the social and historical aspects of Ward's thesis with which we have so far been concerned. We shall look briefly at one of these only, that of Gerald Wilkes.

Before reading the article from Wilkes (reading 2), it is necessary to comment on the term 'social structure' which you will find is used to describe a hierarchy of power, influence and status based on such factors as occupation, wealth, education and ethnic background. In most sociological descriptions of society and inequality, it is usual to distinguish between working classes; middle (or bourgeois) classes; and upper classes (large landowners, or perhaps aristocrats). The classes which comprise the social structure are mainly shaped by the organisation of work and control of resources, leading to different levels of wealth and influence - matters which will be more fully discussed in Course HP05a, *Work in History*. The social structure of a city ('urban social structure') may differ from that of the countryside ('rural social structure') owing to differences in the patterns of occupation and ownership.

Diversity in rural social structure

The bush ethos was supposed to be essentially democratic and egalitarian in spirit, lacking those inherited inequalities of wealth and status which were thought to be typical of Britain. The social and political outlook of the bush was supposed to be based on a 'fluid' or 'open' social structure, as against the 'rigid' or 'closed' social structure of Britain. The bush was a great 'leveller': practical skills were more highly valued than lofty social origins, and 'tall poppies' were not respected unless they had demonstrated their (usually physical, 'masculine') abilities.

According to Wilkes, the democratic and egalitarian elements of the Australian legend have been exaggerated and romanticised. The outback society (rural social structure) which generated the bush myth was actually based on a highly

developed 'pecking order', a hierarchy of occupations and ethnic groups. Hence, the actual outlook of the rural population was not as egalitarian and democratic as the legend portrays it. One of the notable features of Wilkes's critique is that his sources (mainly literature and travellers' observations) are similar to those of Ward.

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Read Gerald Wilkes, 'The Australian Legend: some notes towards redefinition', reading 2.

You can afford to read fairly quickly, noting the main stages of the argument, underlining key sentences, and keeping in mind that much of the literary evidence is merely used to illustrate the main points. When you have read the article, answer the following questions.

****

SAQ 6

1. List the main social groups and occupations identified by Wilkes in bush society.

2. What term does Wilkes use to describe the opposite of 'egalitarian'? (p.2).

3. Does Wilkes claim that the Australian legend is totally false? Give his reason (p.2).

4. In the last paragraph of the article (p.330), how does Wilkes interpret the 'real' content of the democratic and egalitarian attitudes attributed to the bush myth?

3.3 The Ward thesis and Australian literature

The literary implications of Ward's argument arise from his account of what happened to those 'bush' values and attitudes, independently nurtured in the outback, when they infiltrated the cities. They were, by this account, embodied in the idealised, 'legendary' figure of the Bushman as he appears in fictional form in the poems and stories of writers like Paterson, Lawson and Furphy. Ward's term for this process of idealisation and 'mythicisation' of the Bushman is 'apotheosis', which means elevation or sanctification, and it took place, by his account, not only through literature, but also through the newly emerging trade union movement which found a 'culture-hero' ready-made in the Bushman. Our main concern will be with the literary form of apotheosis.

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Read Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, chapter 7, 'The Bushman Comes of Age' (pp.180-206) and chapter 8, 'The Apotheosis of the Nomad Tribe' (pp.207-37).

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SAQ 7

On the basis of your reading of the above sections of Ward, write brief notes in answer to the following questions:

1. In Chapter 7:

   (a) How would you define 'up-country ethos' in about 25 words?

   (b) Where was the 'up-country ethos' particularly durable and why?

   (c) What phrases in this section show Ward's view of literary writing (what he terms 'formal literature') as the reflection of the bush experience in which the legend was born?

2. In Chapter 8:

   (a) How does Ward treat the question of the city dweller's consciousness of the 'old up-country ethos'?

   (b) What, for Ward, is the relation between this 'up-country ethos' and the activity (literary and otherwise) of the *Bulletin*?

Questions 1(c) and 2(b) in the preceding exercise refer back to our earlier concern with different ways of conceiving the relation between literature and social experience. It will have been evident that Ward proposes what is, in effect, a very simple 'reflection' model of that relationship. Graeme Davison, in the critique of Ward we shall be reading in a moment, proposes a much more complex and indirect view of the relationship, one in which the relevant social context is not the bush but the city, a context which partly determines, but is not represented or reflected in the literary image of the bush the writers produced. Indeed, it can even be said that the image of the bush need not be conceived as a reflection at all, but rather as one effect among others produced by a certain form of literary writing. Without this view being fully formulated in Davison's article, it is nonetheless presupposed by his argument that the bush legend does not reflect a bush experience, but is an effect produced by the writings of city artists.

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3.4 Literary critiques of Ward

In addition to Davison's quite radical challenge to Ward's argument regarding the writers of the 1890s, we shall take this opportunity to look at a different kind of disagreement, one which seeks merely to modify Ward's argument, not to question (as Davison does) its fundamental tenets. This is represented here by John Hirst's article, 'The Pioneer Legend', which we shall read after first reading and discussing the Davison aticle.

3.4.1 The Davison critique

The title of Davison's article is self-explanatory: 'Sydney and the bush: an urban context for the Australian legend'. In the debate that surrounds Ward's thesis, Davison's is a fairly recent contribution (originally published in 1978).

However, unlike some of the books, articles, radio talks, etc. that followed Ward's book, Davison attempts to make his contribution concrete by placing as many of the bush-writer contributors to the *Bulletin* as possible in their specific environment: the cities of the eastern Australian coast. By doing this, he hopes to counter-balance the status of Ward's work as a sort of 'folk history', a status that Davison regards as a weakness. He does this in part by incorporating into his argument bodies of data that make the argument appear more 'scientific' or objective than Ward's.

What is Davison's substantive criticism of Ward? It is straightforward: the 'typically Australian' set of ideals and values which Ward and others associate with the itinerant bush workers of the late nineteenth century, in fact originated among the *Bulletin* writers themselves, i.e., city writers, who then projected these ideals and values on to the rural figures represented in their writings.

You might note the variation in Davison's title on the conventional phrase 'Sydney or the Bush'. To write 'Sydney and the Bush' is an indication of his central point: that the values of the bush arose in conjunction with the experience of the city; thus the *Bulletin* writers arrived at their 'bush' values independently of the bush workers or their culture. On this basis, four main observations are made:

1. (pp.2-5):

   The social conditions experienced by *Bulletin*-connected writers in Sydney in the 1880s and early 1890s established a contemporary basis for anti-urban feeling.

2. (pp.5-6):

   The *Bulletin* writers used English literary conventions in their descriptions of the Australian scene.

3. (pp.6-8):

   The *Bulletin* writers revealed a shift of 'social consciousness' towards a more intense anti-urban feeling. Their simultaneous production of idealising bush literature is taken as indicating a 'reactive' response of withdrawal from the urban scene.

4. (pp.8-11):

   The Depression and social agitation of the 1890s had two effects:

   (a) they reinforced the writers' disenchantment with the city and their reactive investment of values in the bush;

   (b) in the creation of a temporary alliance of workers and individual writers, working-class values of 'collectivism' and 'egalitarianism' were taken up by the writers. These values correspond to elements in Ward's 'bush ethos'.

In the remainder of the article Davison summarises his argument and engages in some speculation about the later development of the bush legend. You might give some thought to the passing suggestion (p.11) that once the city lost its negative image, and after the nineties' Depression had lifted, the bush was left 'to acquire a new reality of its own'.

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Read Graeme Davison, 'Sydney and the Bush: an urban context for the bush legend' (excerpts), reading 3.

****

SAQ 8

1. Davison considers the notion of a '<u>conscience collective</u>' (p.1) or collective consciousness:

   (a) What is understood by this notion?

   (b) Does Davison deny the existence of such a consciousness or question its accessibility?

   (c) How is this notion related to the thesis advanced by Ward?

(cont'd over page)

(SAQ 8 continued)

2. Davison writes of the 'fundamental weakness of folk history' (p.1). What is understood by 'folk history' and what, for Davison, is its fundamental weakness?

3. Working from the last two pages (p.11) of the article, summarise in a few sentences Davison's essential objection to Ward's thesis. (Note: It is precisely a question of re-contextualising certain 'typically Australian' ideals and images.)

Having completed these questions, you should now re-read pp.6-8 of Davison's essay. In it he attempts the task that you have been confronting at an introductory level in this course: the setting into context of literary works of late nineteenth-century Australia.

3.4.2 The Hirst critique

The article by John Hirst which you are about to read provides a very different view of the values and attitudes behind 'bush writing' from the one you have encountered in Ward. Yet it is a view that will not seem implausible to those of you who attended an Australian primary school for, as Hirst points out in his opening paragraph, 'schools have been the most influential purveyors' of the set of conservative values and ideals which he terms the 'pioneer legend' (as a deliberate counter to Ward's 'bush legend').

****

Read John Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend', reading 4, and then complete SAQ 9 overleaf.

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SAQ 9

1. Describe and explain the 'pioneer' attitude towards each of the following, comparing it in each case with the attitude implied in the 'bush legend' described by Ward, Phillips and others.

   (a) The convicts
   (b) The squatters
   (c) The Aborigines
   (d) Women
   (e) The bush

2. What event in Australian history does the 'pioneer legend' take as the beginning of Australian national self-awareness? Why?

3. What living Australian writers have perpetuated the 'pioneer legend'? What writers have written in active opposition to it? Write a sentence explaining the grounds of the critique offered by the latter.

Notice that Hirst several times sets up the 'pioneer legend' in explicit contrast to the 'bush legend' described by Russel Ward. Part of what Hirst is suggesting is that the two 'legends' co-existed side by side, and that Ward and others should recognise the diversity of 'bush literature' at this time. But he is also suggesting, more contentiously, that some of the work of 'nationalist' writers like Lawson and Paterson actually embodied the 'pioneer' rather than the 'bush legend'. This underlines once again the possibility of reading literary texts in a 'productive' as well as a 'reflective' way. By attending exclusively to the social content of writings about the bush, Ward is able to discover a set of radical ideals expressed; by attending rather to the effects produced by some of the same writings, in particular institutional contexts, notably school curricula, Hirst is able to discover an alignment with quite different ideals, those of the 'pioneers'.

Some of these points will be developed further in a later course, HP04b, *Literary Studies*, where we examine, among other things, the teaching of Australian literature in schools and universities. Here we can conclude by mentioning an example, not dealt with by Hirst, of a Lawson poem which can very easily be read in either fashion. The poem is 'The Teams' (Cantrell, pp.191-92), and we shall be discussing it more fully in section 5 of the course. Here we need only note the possibility of reading the poem both as an embodiment of the 'Australian legend', inasmuch as it reflects a certain social and physical environment, and as an embodiment of the 'pioneer legend', inasmuch as it

produced, for many decades, a certain set of ideological effects by its inclusion in Queensland primary school reading books.

TUTORIAL ONE

This tutorial will include work on each of the following topics:

1. Discussion of the conceptual oppositions dealt with in section 2, especially 'country and city' and the Raymond Williams reading (reading 1). A 10-15 minute segment of Williams's television documentary *The Country and the City* will be viewed and discussed.

2. The Lawson essay and the Daley poem. Bring your Cantrell anthologies with you.

3. The 'Ward thesis' and its critics. Bring your copies of *The Australian Legend*.

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4 AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Our aim in this section of the course will be to broaden our perspective from the fairly concentrated focus provided by the 'Australian legend' debate so as to take in a more general view of historical developments in Australian society during the half-century or so prior to Federation in 1901. Then, within the context provided by that more general view, we shall examine a selection of nineteenth century texts chosen from Manning Clark's *Sources of Australian History*. In doing this we hope to demonstrate some of the simpler ways in which a text can be used as a historical document, and can thus form part of a historical argument. Here the relevance of our earlier distinction between 'reflective' and 'productive' approaches to written texts will begin to become apparent, since in this section the former approach will be adopted; that is, the texts will be looked at, in the main, as reflections of the social, political and economic realities we know about from other sources. This is not to deny the importance of other, more complex and indirect relations between texts and contexts than the ones we shall be concerned with here, nor are we suggesting that history, as a discipline, is exclusively concerned with simple, reflective relations. But it remains true that the bulk of our historical knowledge of particular periods does come from documents considered as reflections of their content, and it therefore makes sense to familiarise ourselves with the straightforward interpretative procedures which are involved in research of this kind.

4.1 Social, political and economic developments, 1860-1900

There is no such thing as a completely neutral account of a historical period. Especially where the account embraces a long period of time and a large number of events and developments, all within a relatively short space, there are certain to be assumptions and biases involved in the telling which could always have been different, and produced a different account. All of this applies to Raymond Crawford's chapter, which is our next reading, but since we are using it as a convenient source of information rather than an example of historical writing we shall leave such questions to be taken up in later courses, notably those in Unit 7 (*Penal Colony 1* and *Penal Colony 2*) where Australian historiography will be scrutinised more directly. For present purposes, you should read the excerpt for information, then attempt the exercise that follows.

****

Read Raymond Crawford, 'Aggressive Democracy, 1860-1900' (excerpt), reading 5.

****

SAQ 10

1. Make a list of about twelve single-word subject single headings representing the different areas of Australia's development Crawford discusses.

2. Write a short sentence or phrase beside each word to indicate what is said on each subject.

The wealth of digested information in the Crawford reading (which is its main value for us) is nonetheless contained throughout within a coherent overall 'project' of the author's, which is to chart the growth and progress of a distinctively Australian set of democratic values and institutions. (From this it will be clear that Crawford has much in common with Russel Ward, whose project could be described in similar terms.) The treatment of each particular area of Australian life is in some way related to this general view of the period. It may be worth keeping this general level of Crawford's account in mind, if only to help us use it to build a context for the texts or documents we shall be reading next.

4.2 Some historical documents

The texts you will be reading in a moment do not necessarily come from the precise period covered by the Crawford chapter. Most of them are associated with life on the Victorian goldfields, and one is even earlier. What you will notice, however, is that it is possible to say certain things about the texts as documents, that is, as historical evidence, precisely because the Crawford chapter covers a later period in which the historical consequences of events and experiences described in the documents may be supposed to be present. Because we know - or at least have a general idea, based on Crawford - of later directions in Australian society, we can scrutinise the documents for factual details, expressed attitudes, and other signs or tokens of the larger reality we take them to represent or reflect, namely, Australian society as a whole at a somewhat earlier stage on the same continuum of development as that mapped out by Crawford for the later period 1860 to 1900.

The first text which we shall approach in this 'documentary' fashion is one which reports the scene at

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Circular Quay in Sydney on the arrival of the convict ship *Hashemy* on 11 June, 1849. The report appears in one of the textbooks for this course, Manning Clark's *Sources of Australian History*, (pp.243-53), and is entitled 'The Great Protest Meeting'. The immediate historical context for the event described may be gleaned from Clark's introductory comments to chapter 3, sections 6, 7 and 8 on the transportation debate in Britain and Australia. The wider context to keep in mind as you read the document is that of the debates in the colony over what sort of society Australia should be, particularly in the light of its convict beginnings, and over the question of whether New South Wales should become a partly self-governing colony rather than remain under the direct jurisdiction of Britain. (If you find that this document whets your appetite for a fuller study of the convict system itself, you will be pleased to know that Unit 7 of the Programme (*Penal Colony 1* and *Penal Colony 2*) deal with it in considerable detail.)

****

First, read the introductions to sections 6, 7 and 8 in *Sources of Australian History*, pp.189, 223 and 243.

Now read the report of The Great Protest Meeting in *Sources of Australian History*, pp.243-53.

****

SAQ 11

When you have read the report above, answer briefly the following questions:

1. What main points did the speakers have in common on this occasion?

2. What evidence is there that the colonies were not prepared, as yet, to claim a separate colonial identity?

The report on The Great Protest Meeting is marked by constant assertions of loyalty to the Crown (the source, after all, of power for the individuals speaking), and an insistence on the notion of Britain as the origin of positive values. However, if you now turn to Section 12 of the same chapter in *Sources of Australian History* (pp.278-95), you will see that in the documents concerning conditions on the goldfields invocations of duty and loyalty to Britain have all but disappeared. These documents make up the second set of materials for examination.

****

Read Manning Clark, *Sources of Australian History*, pp.278-95.

****

SAQ 12

1. What features of life on the goldfields, as reported in the documents you have just read, could be cited as evidence of a more general progression in Australian society towards a more independent status as a colony?

2. What features could be used to construct an argument against assigning a 'progressive' significance to the gold rush? (You might think about this under two headings: (a) those features which seem to reflect an increased respect for the 'status quo', and (b) those features which suggest that the Gold Rush was a socially aberrant phenomenon, with little general significance for Australian society as a whole.)

The preceding exercise will have indicated to you some of the problems associated with the use of primary historical materials, i.e., documents, in historical investigations. In particular, you will have noticed that the same document, or set of documents, can be used as a source of evidence for quite different, or even opposing, historical interpretations. What details we select as the significant ones in a given report depends very much on what general view of the situation we wish to support - a 'progressive' or a 'conservative' view, for example.

You will also have noticed a point not taken up in the exercise, namely, that even within such a unified set of documents as these there are quite clear indications of wide political differences between the authors. The journalists responsible for the first two reports (30 August and 10 September, 1851) are clearly more progressive, even 'republican', in their political sympathies than the correspondents of the later pieces. Without further information, we can only speculate about the other factors involved: whether, for example, the change in tone between the earlier and later reports reflects changes in the conditions of life on the goldfields, as well as political differences between one correspondent and another.

One final issue we can raise in relation to this set of documents, is that of transmission. You will remember that this was a central point at issue in the 'Ward debate', with Davison and others disputing Ward's account of both the

means and the direction of transmission of the bush legend. Here a similar question derives fairly directly from those posed in the preceding SAQ. If a progressive ethos of sorts did develop on the goldfields in response to the special social and physical conditions of life there, can we show that it was transmitted to other areas of Australian society? What evidence is there in other areas of society, at the relevant time, that such an ethos existed and that it derived from the goldfields? If there is evidence of such an ethos, by what channels - journalistic, political, literary, or just 'word of mouth' - did it make its way from its place of origin on the goldfields?

Most of these latter questions are unanswerable on the basis of the handful of documents we have studied. However, it has been of some value to see that the documents can be used to generate the questions, and thus give directions for further research, that is, further examination, of other primary materials that may provide answers.

If you have not read Chapter 5 in Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend*, you may wish to do so at this stage, as it provides a convenient instance of a developed historical argument about the significance of the Gold Rushes for the growth of Australian independence, an argument based on documents of the kind we have looked at in this section. This chapter of Ward will also figure in Part One of the Assessment Item for this course.

Our final example of the documentary treatment of texts may be of some assistance in your work on Ward, since he makes quite liberal use of literary texts as documents which reflect the social realities of their period. Here we shall look briefly at some of the nineteenth-century bush ballads from this point of view.

****

Read the collection of four bush songs in *Sources of Australian History*, pp.271-78.

****

SAQ 13

Answer briefly the following questions in relation to the four bush songs you have just read.

1. What picture is painted of the opportunities for the working man in Australia?

(cont'd over page)

(SAQ 13 continued)

2. Is there any indication in any of these verses that Australia offers something distinctive and worthwhile as against England (or Ireland)?

3. How is hard work represented?

What is lacking from all these documents is a developed sense of Australia as anything more than a colony - a put-upon outpost of the British Empire. And necessarily lacking, since the theory - and the literature - of independence had yet to come. Even the popular songs and ballads that you can read in section 11 of the chapter 'Settlers, convicts, and gold diggers, 1821-56' in *ources of Australian History* are modelled precisely on homeland (that is, English) ballads of the period. What is more, the tunes were almost always the same. In other words, the ballads generally reflect a fairly early stage in the development of an independent national consciousness among Australians. With the exception noted in the answers to questions 2 and 3 of SAQ 13 above, they present a pessimistic, disenchanted view of Australia. This is markedly different from the note of optimism and celebration which we find in the literature of the 1880s and 1890s, and which we can read as reflecting, in turn, a more advanced stage in the growth of an independent consciousness.

This concludes our discussion of the movement towards national independence as considered from a broadly historical perspective. Throughout this section we have been concerned:

1. to provide a broader context for the 'bush legend' than the Ward debate alone could do;

2. to demonstrate what may be called a 'reflective' or (more awkwardly, but less ambiguously) a 'reflectionist' approach to the study of texts in their historical context.

In the next section, we shall turn to literature fairly exclusively, and attempt to illustrate a somewhat different approach to the study of texts.

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5 AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE: A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

In the preceding section we examined a selection of nineteenth century documents, or texts, in the historical context of Australia's emergence as an independent nation. Our method of analysis was broadly reflectionist: that is, we looked for, and discovered, features in each document which directly reflected the historical situation as we understood it in social, political and economic terms.

What we shall be doing in this section is rather different. While remaining within the same broadly 'progressive' or 'developmental' conception of Australia's colonial history (a conception which is itself quite open to challenge, as you will see in later courses, especially Course HP07b, *Penal Colony 2*), we shall be examining a selection of literary texts, and we shall be doing so by a productivist method of analysis. What this means is simply that instead of treating the texts as passive reflectors of prior historical realities we shall be looking at them as active agents which produce particular effects. To obtain a degree of comparability between texts we have chosen to concentrate on the presentation of the Australian bush landscape in a number of poems, giving particular attention to the images of the bush landscape produced by different poets at different times.

This does not mean that we shall be treating the texts in a historical vacuum, as if no relationship existed between the texts and their social contexts. As we have stated several times, contextual factors may operate in complex and indirect ways on texts, and in such cases the metaphor of 'reflection' is, for our purposes, inappropriate. In what follows we shall be looking at the texts primarily in terms of the literary effects they produce, but it will also be clear, at various points in the discussion, that these effects are themselves related to particular contexts. For example, we would certainly expect to find connections and analogies of various kinds between these literary versions of the landscape and the socio-economic situation of their period. A productivist approach does not necessarily involve denying or ignoring links between texts and contexts; it merely insists on the need to see the text, in the first instance, as an active producer of effects - images, ideals, myths, legends and the like - some of which may well be related to, but do not reflect, certain of the conditions surrounding its production. For the sake of clarity, we shall reserve our use of the concept 'reflection' to the more simple, direct and passive notion of the relationship between texts and contexts.

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5.1 Residue of an English tradition

Our study of the poems in this section will attempt, among other things, to trace a certain progression in the images of the bush landscape produced in literature during the nineteenth century, a progression away from English images of the landscape and towards more 'Australian' images. This progression could obviously be thought of as a movement of consciousness in the direction of a more confident and independent sense of Australian identity, and it would then parallel (rather than reflect) many of the historical developments described by Crawford and Ward in the preceding section.

For this purpose, two poems have been selected from the early colonial period, specifically the decade of the 1840s (readings 6 and 7): Richard Howitt's 'To the Daisy', and Charles Harpur's 'The Creek of the Four Graves'. We shall also be looking at a group of poems of the 1890s in Cantrell's book, *The 1890s*. They are Victor Daley's 'Correggio Jones' (pp.15-16) and 'The Muses of Australia' (pp.20-21); and Henry Lawson's 'The Sliprails and the Spur' (pp.189-90) and 'The Teams' (pp.191-92).

****

Read Richard Howitt, 'To the Daisy', reading 6.

****

SAQ 14

1. In one word, how would you describe the image of the country that Howitt depicts in the poem.

2. Apart from its being an English native (in a botanical sense), what qualities of the daisy make it preferable, in Howitt's eyes, to any Australian flower?

3. To whom does the poet consign Australian flowers for enjoyment and appreciation?

This poem does not require detailed commentary. In a progression away from English models and expectations of the natural landscape, Howitt's poem is an obvious point of departure. In it he frankly admits to being unable to respond with any real warmth to the native flowers, except insofar as they approximate England's. He can pay only lip service to their 'tints of beauty rare', but they have no personal meaning for him.

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I never gathered them, nor knew,
Where I a child to manhood grew; -
What have I then with them to do?
(61-3)

The second poem, Harpur's 'The Creek of the Four Graves' is a rather more complex and difficult piece.

****

Read Charles Harpur, 'The Creek of the Four Graves', reading 7.

****

It was formerly said of Harpur, as of the early colonial poets generally, that they were so enslaved to the poetic *conventions** of the English literary tradition that even though (unlike Howitt) they wanted to do poetic justice to the Australian landscape, they were literally unable to do so - unable, that is, to perceive or represent the 'truth' of their adopted environment. This view has long been recognised as a vast oversimplification, especially of Harpur's poetry, and the poem you have just read will show that this is so.

This is not to deny that there are major aspects of this poem - the *verse form** and the *diction**, for example - which are heavily influenced by English literary models. But the treatment of physical environment in the poem has a force and a logic all of its own, despite the fact that it is not primarily a descriptive poem but a *narrative** one.

The first thing to notice about the poem is that it purports to be a story told to the poet by a friend about the 'old times' when the pioneer settlers were seeking new pastures in unexplored territory. The situation is therefore defined from the beginning as one in which the White Man confronts the wilderness, and tries to 'conquer' it. This framing context is reasserted in the last line.

What is the importance of this context? We can approach an answer to this question by noting the persistent references the poem makes to the unfamiliar, alien qualities of the bush environment. For example, the creek is 'nameless', the willow is 'wild', the eminences are 'new' (12-15). There are 'birds of new shape and plume,/And wild strange voice' (21-22). The unfamiliarity is mutual:

The echoes of the solitary place
Came, as in wonder, round about, to meet
Strange voices in a stranger speech
(28-30)

The relationship between the white men and their physical surroundings is always shown as essentially alien. The Aborigines, on the other hand, are so completely in accord

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with their environment as to be almost indistinguishable from it. In a sense, their attack seems to represent, in graphic form, the potential hostility of the bush itself.

The bush then (or as Harpur would say, the 'forest') is presented as alien to white people. The most potent symbol of this is perhaps the image of the moon shining peacefully on the four mutilated corpses (176-83). The moon, a part of the estranged environment, demonstrates its utter lack of sympathy with the white men by looking down on the scene of their death 'as on a bridal there/Of the warm living' (182-83). (Note, however, that Harpur gives his description a somewhat different symbolic significance (184-87) from the one suggested here. Does this matter?)

But it is a paradox of Harpur's writing that this sense of an alien environment does not preclude a fidelity to detail which can be arresting in its physical immediacy. Look, for example, at the descriptions of the encircling trees (43-45), the hill illuminated by the moon (54-62), the fire (85-88, 174-75), the hole in the creek bank (147-50), and the Aborigines in the creek (161-64). These lines have been chosen not just to illustrate a striking fidelity to physical detail. If you examine each description you will also find that in every case that effect is gained partly by a few words of rational explanation. To take two examples, the lighter trees (43-45) are separated from their darker background because of the firelight; the saving 'cavity' (147-50) is there in the bank because the tea-tree roots have been tangled together. A similar analysis can be made for each of the descriptions. The most striking of all, of course, is the lengthy explanation (98-126) given as to why, despite the fact that 'his own warm brains were blinding him', one of the four men struggles to stand against the blows of the nulla-nullas.

You should check these references for yourself; when you have done so you may find the analysis unconvincing. Literary criticism is largely a matter of debate rather than proof, and disagreement over points of analysis and interpretation is utterly normal. Nevertheless, it is worth pursuing the analysis offered so far to some sort of general conclusion. Briefly, we would wish to argue that the poem does in fact exhibit a consistent pattern of 'thinking through' perceptions of physical reality, not merely registering them, and that this pattern can be assigned a certain significance, as follows. Faced with a physical environment which is alien to his consciousness, Harpur has developed a pattern of response which, in effect, enacts a desire for the kind of mental access to that environment which he cannot in fact accomplish.

It is for this reason that the story of 'old settlers' in a 'wild country' is particularly appropriate. The story is held at a distance from the poet, but its significance as a representation of his own relation to the natural

environment is hinted at by the questioning note on which the narrator (or is it the poet?) ends:

> What think you
> Of my Tale?

Or to put it a little differently, we can see, in Harpur's poem, not so much a different image of the bush from Howitt's, but the process by which the image of the bush is changing.

It is perhaps becoming clear how, on the basis of a 'close reading' of the poem, we can argue that Harpur's literary relation to the natural environment - the bush - represents a step forward on a line progressing towards a closer relation than we find in Howitt's poem.

5.2 The 'bush legend' established: the 1890s

The next and, for our purposes, final stage in the process of change evident in Harpur's poem can be studied in some of the poems of the 1890s, and in the images of the bush they produce.

****

Read the following four poems in Cantrell: Victor Daley's 'Correggio Jones' (pp.15-16) and 'The Muses of Australia' (pp.20-21); Henry Lawson's 'The Sliprails and the Spur' (pp.189-90) and 'The Teams' (pp.191-92).

****

These poems may be dealt with fairly quickly. In terms of the progression we have been constructing, they all represent a new stage of literary acceptance and assimilation of the natural environment. The rapid 'mythologising' of the bush which took place in literature at this time, and of which there is evidence in these poems, can be regarded as a direct consequence of the fairly sudden discovery of 'human meaning' in the natural environment.

****

Re-read Victor Daley, 'Correggio Jones'.

****

In Victor Daley's 'Correggio Jones', various elements of what we may now call the 'bush legend' are conveniently itemised in the first eight stanzas. They are the subjects that Jones refuses to paint, and they include the bush itself, the explorers, the old prospector, the heroes of the Eureka Stockade, and other images evocative of the harshness and solitude of the bush. Jones is a comic figure who is confidently held up to ridicule for his inability to see the

superiority of Australian scenery to the traditional subjects of the European academy. (Correggio, by the way, is the name of a sixteenth century Italian painter.) But the thing that most clearly underlines the new attitude is the appearance, in the first part of the poem, of a whole new range of mythic stereotypes. It suggests that a new indigenous organisation of perception or 'way of seeing' has been arrived at, something above and beyond the mere willingness to find meaning in the bush (a willingness which, as we say, Harpur shared).

****

Re-read Daley, 'The Muses of Australia'.

****

Like many of the poems of the 1890s, this is a poem about poetry. It makes very much the same general point as the previous poem, namely that Australia - which really means the Australian bush - can provide its own distinctive range of material to inspire artists. The argument is made in terms of the Muses, the figures from Greek mythology that represent the sources of inspiration in the various arts. As a matter of somewhat pedantic interest, the three sections of the poem are devoted to three of the nine Classical Muses, which are claimed to have reappeared in Australia. They are, in order, the Muse of lyric song (Erato), of epic poetry (Calliope), and of tragedy (Melpomene).

An interesting feature of this poem is the way in which it constructs a miniature history of Australian poetry. Kendall and Adam Lindsay Gordon are named as the great representatives of indigenous lyric and epic poetry, respectively. The tragic Desert Muse is yet to come.

SAQ 15

1. How would you interpret Daley's representation of the 'Desert Muse' of Australian poetry? Why does he call her 'the greatest' of the three Australian Muses?

2. Compare the significance of the Desert Muse in this poem with that of the desert prophets in A.D. Hope's poem 'Australia' (1939), which was included among the readings for Course HP01a, *Defining Australia*.

****

Now re-read Lawson, 'The Sliprails and the Spur' and 'The Teams'.

****

The first of these is a common type of 'sad tale', very popular with Romantic and Victorian writers - the 'Abandoned Fiancée' motif, perhaps. In any case, there is nothing particularly Australian about the story itself. Two points are worth noting, however, in the context of the development of an indigenous literary treatment of the bush.

1. The use of a distinctively Australian 'bush object' - the sliprails - as the symbolic focus of the story.

2. The implied justification - or at least the refusal to condemn - an act of abandonment for which no motive is given other than the man's 'restless heart'. This pattern is by no means unparalleled in other national literatures, but we may see something here of that idealisation of the itinerant life of the bush labourer that was to figure in a whole tradition of Australian writing, up to and beyond Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

SAQ 16

What other features of this poem strike you as in some way distinctively Australian?

As we mentioned at the end of section 3, 'The Teams' is, or was, frequently included in school anthologies. One can understand why. Technically, it is a rather 'showy' piece of work - Lawson and Paterson were nothing if not expert craftsmen in verse - and it therefore lends itself to fairly crude forms of 'literary appreciation'. Perhaps more importantly it attaches a powerful ideological message to the description of the bullock teams. The first and last stanzas in particular sit very comfortably alongside more direct exhortations to put one's faith in honest effort, not to look for easy solutions to difficult problems, to stay for the long haul and so forth - all most useful values to be circulating in times of economic and social hardship, such as the Depression of the 1890s when the poem was written. To that extent we may say that the poem was partly determined by its social context. But enshrinement in school readers suggests that its ideological function in later periods was rather more active and productive than the notion of determination usually implies.

What is particularly noteworthy about this poem, at

least in terms of the general literary progression we have been talking about, is the way in which it treats the harshness and cruelty of life in the bush. This was to become Lawson's forte, as we shall see later, but here it can perhaps be related to Daley's convictions (in both of his poems in this group) about the poetic value of the *harsher and uglier* aspects of the Australian bush. What Daley postulates as a literary possibility, Lawson puts into practice. Here, for example, the suffering and toil of the bullock-driver's battle with the bush is redeemed and 'humanised', not just by being given an abstract moral and ideological interpretation (the value of perseverance etc.), but by being shown as part of a social environment. The hardships are not endured in a wilderness remote from human society (as in the Harpur poem), but in a place where there are settlers to pass the time of day with and children to hear the whips being cracked. This is not, in fact, a mere reflection of changed external conditions: there was still plenty of unsettled country in the 1890s. It signifies, rather, a shift in the way of relating to the harshness of the bush environment. Instead of being felt as alien to human beings, it can now be felt as an integral part - socially, morally and physically - of human experience.

This concludes our study of the progression, in poetry, from a British rejection of the bush environment (in Howitt), through the interesting middle stage represented by Harpur, to a full acceptance and assimilation of the bush, and the formation of a 'bush legend', in the poets of the 1890s. As was suggested earlier, this progression can be paralleled to the development of a greater social and political independence for Australia in the same period, but the progression we have traced in this section is one of poetic images in a process of transformation. And this has a certain logic of its own, as a developing series of effects produced by literary texts, not merely reflected in them.

5.3 The *Bulletin* and the bush

So far we have dealt with the literature of the 1890s unproblematically, as a culmination or fulfilment, in literary terms, of the development of a nationalist consciousness through the latter half of the nineteenth century. We shall not, at this stage, be mounting a full-scale critique of this view, but we can at least indicate, by looking rather more closely at the main literary journal of this period, the *Bulletin*, that literary production in the 1890s was considerably more diverse and complex than the 'nationalist' celebration of the period as crucial in the formation and establishment of an Australian national consciousness, makes it appear. This is particularly true with regard to the literary representation of the bush.

We can begin with Leon Cantrell's Introduction to *The 1890s* which, while focussing on the decade as a kind of

literary watershed, is at pains to make more concrete a period which is often seen through a romantic haze. This haze only flatters the commonly held view that the writing of the 1890s, closely preceding Federation and extolling the notions of the bush, the bushman, and a New Australian, was the purest literary flowering of some undefined 'Australian spirit'. Cantrell, however, is careful to avoid merely praising literary virtues.

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Read Leon Cantrell, the Introduction to *The 1890s*, pp.xi-xxv.

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In reading the Introduction, you will have noted how Cantrell does not dispute that the nineties saw a proliferation of verse and prose; however, he concerns himself with the way in which this flowering has been represented as the beginning of a tradition that has set the mark on Australian literature ever since, with the nationalist writings of the 1890s having come to be regarded as 'the natural and appropriate norms for Australian writers and artists'.

The questions raised by Cantrell are directed at the following assumptions:

(a) that the period of the 1890s saw the establishment of the true quality of Australian life and of an Australian nationalism based on the uniqueness of the bush experience yet politically radical;

(b) that the literary writing of the 1890s represents a direct expression of this new Australian nationalism and its radical politics, and that this writing is therefore itself the radical and truly indigenous form of cultural production.

Of relevance to our focus on the preoccupation with the bush is Cantrell's reminder that there was in fact much diversity in the literature of the period, even though city and political themes are, on the whole, conspicuous by their absence. This absence of explicit 'city' themes is complicated, however, by the possibility that many of the virtues ascribed to bushmen (individual freedom, independence of spirit, etc.) were, as Cantrell hints, precisely the virtues extolled by city-dwelling writers. This point is taken up by Richard White in his comments on Bohemians and the bush in *Inventing Australia* (pp.85-109), which you may wish to consult.

Perhaps, more importantly, Cantrell draws attention to the way in which certain key critics, such as H.M. Green, nonetheless endorsed a romantic view of the 1890s in their talk of a certain 'spirit of the times', a 'fervent

democratic nationalism' and so on. This positive nationalist stance with regard to the literary writings of the period has had, for Cantrell, the paradoxical effect of serving as a 'potent force for conservatism in Australian literature and culture generally', in part by providing a safe model for the study of Australian literature in terms that are entirely acceptable to institutions such as schools and universities. A similar nationalist stance has been maintained in the rhetoric of today's politicians and newspaper leader-writers.

Cantrell's opinion that this literature, which others have taken to be politically radical, was rather to be seen as conservative, has other implications. For instance, the *Bulletin* has enjoyed a reputation as the radical journal of the 1890s, espousing anti-colonial and egalitarian views. For Cantrell, this reputation is not justified. In its place he advances the suggestion that the *Bulletin*'s principal political concern was 'the preservation and furtherance of middle-class self-help and capital'.

Our concern is not to make a final assessment of whether Cantrell's opinion is well founded or not. What matters is to get an initial sense that the significance of the *Bulletin* in the literary work of the 1890s is very much a question of debate. The note on the following page will provide further information on this journal which is at the centre of the debate.

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Read the *Bulletin*, centenary edition (excerpts), reading 8.

(After completing SAQ 17, below, you might wish to read the articles in *Sources of Australian History*, pp.446-52 to get a sense of just what articles in the *Bulletin* were like.)

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SAQ 17

1. Briefly identify some of the key issues discussed in the *Bulletin*'s first two decades using the commentaries on editors from the *Bulletin*'s centenary edition.

2. Note down the titles of leader articles quoted in *Sources of Australian History*, section 5, pp.392-52.

A NOTE ON THE *BULLETIN*

The *Bulletin* was the Sydney journal which during the 1890s was a key element in the Australian cultural scene. Where literary work was concerned, the so-called Red Page in the *Bulletin* played a central role during the decade, providing for many writers a sole, if erratic, means of survival; it was on the Red Page that several of the works you will read in the course were first published, including the important debate between the writers Paterson and Lawson on the nature of the bush experience.

Literary histories have given a certain view of the *Bulletin* as important above all as a nationalist literary journal that published certain short stories and verse. These literary works, together with some critical articles, are what tend to be anthologised as the essential elements of the *Bulletin*. It is true that many stories - by Henry Lawson, Steele Rudd, Barbara Baynton - have become famous in Australian literary history, as have the nationalist bush-oriented ballads of Lawson, Paterson and others writing in the same genre.

Nevertheless, despite the value of these works, recent discussion is looking beyond the literature to the news, the editorial comment and the readers' letters that were published in the pages of the *Bulletin* in the closing decade of the last century. Concern with questions of nationality and race, gender and women, the press itself, appears alongside the concern with the relations of the city and the bush which form our principal object of study in this course. One outcome of this recent discussion is to suggest that nationalism and the bush were not the only preoccupations of this publication of the 1890s.

Some basic historical information on the *Bulletin* is given in reading 8, excerpted from the centenary number of the *Bulletin*. The excerpts focus on the early editors of the journal, their opinions and policies.

Another source for study of the *Bulletin* is the collection of articles in *Sources of Australian History*, section 5, pp.446-52, and Sylvia Lawson's *The Archibald Paradox* (see Further Reading).

Our next concern is with the selection of verse included in Cantrell, pp.140-49:

Paterson, 'Clancy of the Overflow'
Morant, 'The Austral Light'
Paterson, 'The Man from Ironbark'
Boake, 'An Easter Rhyme'
Daley, 'In Arcady'
Ogilvie, 'In Town'

You should read them through as a single sequence; take special note, however, of the repeated argument concerning the worth of the bush life, as opposed to existence in the city. As you read, look for signs of the 'egalitarianism' often considered particular to the bush life. This notion of egalitarianism, an ideal equality and reciprocity between all individuals, manifests itself in several ways in this literature as much as it does in political writings.

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Read Leon Cantrell, *The 1890s*, pp.140-49.

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The title of Cantrell's section is, you will notice, 'The City or the bush?'. All of the six poems listed above (as well as three that we shall be looking at later as a separate group) deal with this opposition, but they deal with it in a variety of ways. One obvious set of differences which disrupts the apparent unity of a single city/bush opposition is that whereas the image of the city may remain fairly constant throughout, the sort of 'bush' that forms its opposite term varies greatly. From the far western outback of 'Clancy' and the Morant piece, to the rural township of Paterson's 'Ironbark', the rich agricultural land of Daley's 'Arcady', and the nearly suburban countryside of Boake and Ogilvie, we are faced with a diversity of 'bushes' so great as to cast some doubt, perhaps, on certain arguments (notably Davison's) that tend to stress the interconnectedness, if not the unity, of different images of the bush. (This is a general question, posed in respect of this sequence of poems as a whole, which you may wish to take up in your next tutorial.)

There are, however, several common features in these poems. Perhaps the most striking is their uniform lightness of *tone**. (Had we included the last four poems in the section, this uniformity would have been broken.) Is there some conflict or incongruity between this tone and the serious values the bush seems to represent in much of the 1890s writing? You can address this question in a more specific form by answering SAQ 18.

SAQ 18

If the man from Ironbark and Clancy are both bushmen, do they represent the same virtues?

In Paterson's 'Clancy' and Morant's 'Austral Light' a rhetorical device is used which becomes very common in 'bush writing' generally. This is the device of the 'authentic detail', the introduction of a minor action or object that, for those who recognise it, immediately attests to the truth of whatever claims to bush experience are being made. So, for example, Morant's 'Austral light', Paterson's 'thumbnail dipped in tar' - and to these we may perhaps add Lawson's 'sliprails' - work as a kind of secret sign, only to be recognised and decoded by those who know about the bush. The use of elaborate bush colloquialisms, obscure place names and the like work in a similar fashion.

What is the significance of this device? We could suggest, as does Russel Ward, that such 'recognition' strategies confirm the real social unity of the *Bulletin* writers and their audience of bushmen. It might equally be suggested, against Ward, that such strategies actually confirm the essential ideality or idealised character of the bush experience. Their effect is to protect the treasured myth from the gaze of the uninitiated - or at least to pretend to do so, and thus to give those readers who do recognise the authentic sign an added sense of the value of what they have recognised.

Note that a very similar argument, or debate, could be made in respect of the humorous tone characteristic of a lot of bush writing.

5.4 The 'Paterson-Lawson debate'

The sort of writing you looked at in the preceding section represents a fairly wide range of literary styles - from the balladeering 'Australianism' of 'The Man from Ironbark' to the literary elegance of Daley and Ogilvie - as well as a wide diversity of images of the bush. In this section we shall be narrowing our focus to a particular image of the bush, the image contained in a poem like Paterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow'. It was this image of the 'great outback', in geographic terms mainly the western plains of New South Wales and Queensland, that became the object of considerable controversy (increasingly less light in tone), and in relation to which deep differences and conflicts between various ways of regarding the Australian bush - and Australian society more generally - began to emerge.

We shall examine these differences in the three pieces reproduced at the end of 'The city or the bush?' section of the Cantrell anthology pp.152-59:

Lawson, 'Up the Country'
Paterson, 'In Defence of the Bush'
Lawson, 'The City Bushman'

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Read Leon Cantrell, *The 1890s*, pp.152-59.

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The three poems you have just read were, in fact, only the first shots in an exchange that lasted for several years in the pages of the *Bulletin*, involving many other writers and extending into areas of debate only hinted at in the early contributions.

To give you some sense of the *Bulletin* debate as a whole it will be useful for you to read a recent account of it by Bruce Nesbitt. This is a fairly long article - of necessity, since it covers the whole debate - but you should read it fairly quickly, since much of it is factual rather than argumentative in content. The main lines of Nesbitt's argument are represented on the first and last pages of the article, and these should be read with particular care.

You should not be concerned that many of the pieces referred to by Nesbitt you will not have read, or be able to find in Cantrell. Most of them, with the exception of the pieces by Lawson and Paterson, would be difficult to get hold of in a library anyway, and Nesbitt's summaries are perfectly adequate for our purposes. However, you might wish to read, as optional extra readings, some of the Lawson pieces in Cantrell which are relevant to the debate. These will not receive any specific commentary.

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Read Bruce Nesbitt, 'Literary nationalism and the 1890s' (excerpts), reading 9.

Optional readings: Henry Lawson, 'Australian Bards and Bush Reviewers' (Cantrell, p.17)

Lawson, 'The Uncultured Rhymer to his Cultured Critics' (Cantrell, p.22)

Lawson, 'In a wet season' (Cantrell, p.246)

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Two general features of the *Bulletin* debate, as Nesbitt described it, deserve particular emphasis:

1. Notice how the terms of the debate kept changing. What began, with Lawson, as an argument about literature and its proper relation to 'reality' became, at different times, a debate on social and political issues that had nothing directly to do with literature. There is no particular reason to regard these extensions of the debate as 'illegitimate' or 'illogical' - and Nesbitt is perhaps open to criticism in that he seems to imply that the original, i.e., literary, form of the debate should be somehow treated as its most important aspect.

2. R.W.B. Lewis's argument that 'mature' national cultures tend to take the form of debates enables us to see the *Bulletin* exchange as an early stage in a much larger and longer debate over the central question of national identity. An important later stage in this debate, in which the bush continues to function as a kind of touchstone or catalyst for various other contentious issues, is represented by the debate over the 'Ward thesis'.

This concludes our brief examination of the literary dimension of Australia's development towards independence in the nineteenth century, and of the significance of the 'bush legend' in that context. In the next and final section we shall attempt to focus some of the broader perspectives outlined in this section by applying them to a particular literary and historical problem in Australian culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

6 A CULTURAL INSTANCE: WOMEN AND THE BUSH

It has been argued very strongly in recent years, by feminist historians such as Anne Summers, and socialist literary critics such as John Docker, that traditional Australian culture - including written history and literature - has tended to exclude women in a number of specific ways. This is too large an area of discussion and debate for us to enter into in any detail in this course, but its relevance to the bush legend is clear. To the extent that the bush literature of the 1890s has been held to constitute some kind of essential Australian tradition, the question of where and how women figure in that literature becomes an obvious and important one to ask.

It has been claimed that the literature of the 1890s excludes women as it does other races. As with most large generalisations, this one looks less safe the closer we get to the materials themselves. As mentioned earlier, the *Bulletin* included among its offerings articles on questions of women and gender, and among the writers on bush themes who contributed to the Red Page were women such as Miles Franklin and Barbara Baynton. This is not intended to suggest, however, that women were not, generally speaking, excluded from the dominant image of Australian national identity being forged at this time. But their presence on the literary scene, both as writers and as objects of literary attention (characters), can hardly be denied.

6.1 Women's experience of the bush

To establish a minimal historical context to which you can relate the stories you will be reading shortly, you might now like to look through a selection of documents concerning women's actual experience of life in the outback.

You are by now well aware that simply calling something a document does not guarantee its veracity. It simply means that we have decided to accord a particular item the status, provisionally, of a reflection of historical reality. Thus, you will not imagine that because the excerpts presented in the next reading are taken from an autobiography, a letter, and some journalists' reports, they will necessarily provide a less distorted picture of the reality than a story or a poem might do. On the other hand, it is true that there are conventions governing the 'non-fictional' forms of writing which make it reasonable not to expect systematic departures from the observed realities.

In short, we shall regard the documents as giving us, for our present purposes, an accurate description of some aspects of women's actual experience in various bush environments.

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Now read the five excerpts, with accompanying commentary, Ruth Teale, *Colonial Eve*, reading 10, pp.91-92, 94-95, 233-37.

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The first thing you should notice about the 'reality' the documents reflect is its diversity: the social distance between women like Ada Cambridge and Rachel Henning, on the one hand, and the selectors' wives discussed in the final excerpt, is obviously very great, and the situation of Lang's Miss Drysdale is different from either. What this suggests is that just as there is no single 'bush', so there is no single 'woman of the bush'. Women experienced the outback in many different ways, as determined by class, region, and other factors. Thus when we find a writer like Henry Lawson presenting a particular kind of experience, that of his Drover's Wife, as that of the 'bush woman' in general, we may suspect a 'legend' or 'myth' is being produced. We shall return to this point in the next section.

The second point you may have noticed about the reading is the mention made by the editor (R10:4) of two of the very stories we shall shortly be reading - they are seen as being vivid factual accounts of the life of the farmer's wife. This alerts us to the possibility of approaching even literary texts in precisely the 'reflectionist' manner in which we approached the bush songs in section 4 of the course. As it happens, we shall be adopting a different approach in our examination of those stories, but it is important to recognise the possiblity, and the utility, of the other, somewhat simpler, approach.

6.2 The image of women and the image of the bush

The three stories you are about to read are very different from one another in tone and atmosphere, varying from the comic, to the grotesque, to the sentimental. However, they have enough in common to make a comparison of all three both interesting and worthwhile: all three are concerned in some way with the plight of a married woman in the bush; all three women characters (one of whom is absent) represent a very narrow band on the socio-economic spectrum marked out by the documents in the previous reading; and all three stories produce, by fairly complex literary means, a certain image of 'women in the bush' - not the same image in each case, but images which are significantly related to one another.

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Now read Henry Lawson, 'The Drover's Wife' in Cantrell, pp.234-42.

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As many of you will know, this story of Lawson's, like his poem 'The Teams' which we discussed in the preceding section, has been regularly used in school readers and anthologies. Its suitability for this purpose undoubtedly has to do with the 'pioneering' virtues of courage in adversity, perseverance, patience and loyalty which it embodies. Having read Hirst's article 'The Pioneer Legend' (reading 4) in Section 3, you can now appreciate the popularity of these themes in school reading lists. You will recall, too, that in works embodying the 'pioneering' virtues, as distinct from those of the more radical 'bush legend', it was by no means uncommon to find idealised images of pioneer women as well as men. In this respect, 'The Drover's Wife' is fairly typical, not of the 'bush legend' but of the 'pioneering legend' in Australian literature.

The story itself, however, repays fairly close attention to matters of style and technique. On a fairly simple level, it is possible to identify various techniques Lawson has used to lend authenticity to the fictional situation and characters. One such technique is the way in which direct speech is used, and not used, in the course of the story. The wife speaks only a few short sentences in direct speech; some of what she says is reported as indirect speech (e.g. 'His mother asks him how many times she has told him not to swear.'). This contrasts with the children, who are given a lot of direct speech; a further aspect of this contrast is that the children's speech is thick with colloquialisms whereas the wife's speech seems neutral and fairly formal. The effect of this technique is to dignify the woman, and this enhances her stature as a kind of legendary figure. You might well think of other comments that could be made concerning the use of dialogue in the story.

Another fairly simple technique by which Lawson works to elicit the reader's sympathy and respect is by deliberately underplaying the pathos of the woman's plight. Re-read the following paragraph, from p.237:

> The last two children were born in the bush - one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with a fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent 'Black Mary' - the 'whitest' gin of all the land.
>
> One of her children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

The succession of short, simple sentences seems at first very incongruous for narrating such a series of woes. They seem almost to prevent the 'build-up' effect we expect in descriptions of tragic events of this kind. But it is at least arguable that it works very successfully to evoke a sympathetic response precisely because it seems to withhold the writer's response, forcing the reader to supply the appropriate emotion.

A further aspect of Lawson's technique concerns the way in which the narrative as a whole is structured. If you have read the story attentively you will have noticed that the narrative alternates constantly between the fictional present and past. The particular dilemma surrounding the snake is narrated only intermittently, interspersed with anecdotes and general information about the woman and her past life. What is the purpose of this complicated arrangement? One answer would be that it serves to suggest that the present dilemma, however dramatic in itself, is by no means unique. On the contrary, it is just one more hardship to be endured, typical of this woman's life in the bush and, by extension, of the lives of outback women in general. The alternating structure of the narrative therefore has a 'universalising' effect, and this further contributes to the legendary aura the woman acquires.

SAQ 19

Look carefully at the distribution of past and present tense verbs throughout the story.

1. In what way is this distribution of tenses unusual?

2. How is the distribution of tenses related to the alternating narrative structure described above?

3. What, in your opinion, is the dominant effect of Lawson's frequent use of the present tense on our perception of the woman?

One final universalising device that may be mentioned very briefly is the use of religious symbolism. Very simply, the story is sometimes read with reference to the biblical story of the Fall, with the bush setting as a kind of Eden and the snake as the Serpent. There is some plausibility in this reading: the woman's killing of the snake might even be seen as a symbolic fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy that the Woman would redeem Adam's fall from Grace by crushing the Serpent's head beneath her foot. We leave you to speculate about the significance of this symbolic pattern in relation to contemporaneous forms of 'bush nationalism' in the writings of the 1890s, and especially, for example, in apocalyptic poems like Lawson's 'The Star of Australasia'

(Cantrell, p.104) and Bernard O'Dowd's 'Where is Australia, singer, do you know?' (reading 13, Course HPO1a).

This has not been an exhaustive study of 'The Drover's Wife', but enough has been said to indicate some of the ways in which the story could be analysed as a set of literary strategies for producing a certain legendary image of the 'bush woman'. The other two stories we shall be looking at produce related, but somewhat differently accented and less idealised, images of women in the bush.

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Now read Henry Lawson, 'The Shanty-Keeper's Wife' in Cantrell, pp.193-200.

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This is Lawson in a fairly light vein, often thought of as the 'typical' Lawson. The ostensible point of the story, of course, is that the shanty-keeper has no wife, and that he has tricked the travellers (probably in collusion with the driver) into spending a lot more on drinks than otherwise they would have done. Up to a point, then, we can see the story as a variant on a very old comic formula, which appears in recognisably similar forms in European literature of the last two thousand years and more.

What we might think of as distinctively 'Australian' in the handling of the formula is the very cryptic and understated way in which the trick is revealed. There is no sense of sudden enlightenment; the deception has to be dragged piecemeal from the driver over a long period of time - and even when it is all out, there is just a hint that there is more to the situation than meets the eye. (Certainly the alleged deception seems, in retrospect, a fairly pointless exercise. Is rum and milk so much more profitable than food? How does the ban on noise assist the supposed deception about the horses?) In short, there are enough 'loose ends' to the alleged trick to raise some doubts about the validity of this explanation. The lack of any general sense of release or mirth when the trick is revealed also departs from the conventional comic pattern, and perhaps reinforces doubts about the explanation.

What we are suggesting is not that the explanation is wrong, that there is a sick wife after all, but rather that the way the story unfolds leaves the reader, for various reasons, with a vague dissatisfaction. If we assume that this is not simply an effect of 'bad writing', how are we to account for it? There are two possible explanations:

1. The casual neglect of 'loose ends' may act as a sort of narrative equivalent of the laconic understatement which is part of the 'bushman' stereotype. This could even be related to the use of 'recognition' devices we noted earlier in some 1890s texts. The incompletely

spelled-out joke, like the unelaborated 'authentic detail', invites the reader to participate with the writer and other knowing readers in an exclusive celebration of superior 'bush codes' of behaviour and talk.

2. The shadowy suggestion of a real situation parallel to the pretended one - which is also a possible effect of the doubts and loose ends - could be elaborated in several directions. What they would all have in common would be a notion that the shanty-keeper is not dishonest but mad - a victim either of delusions or of obsessions, perhaps caused by his wife's betrayal. Such an interpretation would conform to a particular way of reading Henry Lawson's work, and Australian literature in general, which has been very much in vogue since the 1960s, in which a superficially humorous tone is taken to be a mask for deeper unexpressed anxieties and despairs.

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Now read Barbara Baynton, 'Squeaker's Mate' in Cantrell, pp.216-30.

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'Squeaker's Mate'. The oppressed existence of women in the bush, which is only hinted at in the Lawson story (though very fully represented in his most famous story, 'The Drover's Wife') is here in Barbara Baynton's story expressed in terms of the most savage and brutal *irony*. It is tempting to speculate about the connection between the gender of the author and the utterly unsentimental portrayal of the central relationship, but this would take us rather too far from our main concerns.

The story does not really attempt (as perhaps 'The Drover's Wife' does) to depict a whole way of life; the 'mate' is not developed as a representative woman of the bush. Instead, the focus is sharply directed at the quality of the central human relationship, exploring the full extent of its flagrant yet subtle oppressiveness for the woman. A key concept in understanding the effects of the relationship, though the word is not used in the story, is dehumanisation. By progressively depriving her of the last vestiges of human dignity, Squeaker finally reduces his 'old mate' to the level of a beast - though by that stage the behaviour of beasts looks decidedly nobler than that of human beings.

A simple way into this story is to look at the way the word 'mate' is used. In the early part of the story (e.g. the first paragraph) the word is used in a way that clearly suggests the 'mateship' of equal human beings - and the sharing of hard physical work between the two partners suggests that their relationship is indeed a version of that

idealised mateship between men which is at the centre of the bush ethos. This impression is fairly quickly dispelled. As the word 'mate' (later 'old mate') continues to be used, its *connotations** change subtly. (Note down all the occurrences of the word and see if a pattern of change emerges, before reading on.)

What you will have noticed, we hope, is that 'mate' becomes ever more clearly the term for animal bondings. The ironic ambivalence of 'old mate' is particularly pungent: the affectionate human meaning scarcely disguises the animal sense of a discarded partner. Through exploiting the ironic potential of this word, Baynton manages - perhaps only in passing - to hint at the oppressive character of the mateship ideal itself, at least as far as women are concerned.

A final point about the use of irony. The story gains much of its impact by the studied use of understatement (which is rather ironic in its own right, since understatement is often identified as part of the bush code). Here it takes the form mainly of a refusal to comment critically on Squeaker's outrageous selfishness, stupidity, cruelty. One obvious example (pp.217-18) is the episode of the dropped firestick. (See if you can find another three examples.)

The implications of the relationship extend beyond the merely personal, however, and this is made clear at the point where the neighbours come to visit. Red Bob displays the sensitivity of a normal human being (p.219), but the men's condemnation of Squeaker as '"a nole woman", not because he was hanging round the honey tins, but after man's fashion to eliminate all virtue' (p.220) clearly relates the morally abnormal contempt with which Squeaker treats his 'mate' to the normal patterns of social behaviour in the community. A similar extension of the personal to the social is made in connection with the local women's behaviour.

SAQ 20

Read the fourth and fifth paragraphs on p.220 ('Next day ... miserable for him'). What do they tell us about the social determinations of the behaviour of Squeaker and his mate?

This concludes our short engagement with the 'woman question' as it relates to the overlapping set of debates around the 'bush legend'. Perhaps it should be reiterated that one purpose of this section was to demonstrate the two ways in which texts, especially, but not only, literary texts, can be studied in relation to historical contexts.

However, in the course of doing this, at least one substantive issue has been touched upon - the place of women in Australian history and historiography - which will be dealt with more fully and rigorously in a later course (HP07b, *Penal Colony 2*); and some basic procedures of literary analysis have been demonstrated, which should assist you in Part Two of the Assessment Item. These procedures will be further exemplified and discussed in a number of later courses, notably Courses HP04a, *Cultural Formations*, HP04b, *Literary Studies*, and HP10b, *Literary Nationalism*.

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7 CONCLUSION

In the introductory section of the course, you were invited to consider two distinct conceptions of the literary work: one that took the work as reflecting some previous experience; the other that took the literary work as producing a subsequent effect. You were not required to identify one of these conceptions as true, the other false: both represent established and distinct ways of working on literary and other texts, and both, taken to extremes, can distort the relationship between texts and contexts. An approach which is too exclusively concerned with the text as a reflection of its historical context will tend to underestimate the degree to which any given text - and perhaps especially a literary one - actively shapes its context, and may oversimplify its relation to that context. This is a vice to which historians are perhaps particularly prone, though some sociological types of literary criticism also incline towards it. Conversely, an approach which focusses too exclusively on the text as a producer of meanings will tend to underestimate the degree to which social and material factors quite outside the text impinge upon it and impose certain inescapable limits on the meanings it can produce. This vice is incident to orthodox types of literary criticism, when they ignore contextual factors as irrelevant to the full understanding of a literary work.

The course has not been concerned with this theoretical distinction for its own sake, but chiefly as a way of coming to terms with a set of substantive literary and historical materials, organised around a central cultural debate, the 'Australian Legend' debate, involving Russel Ward, Gerald Wilkes, Graeme Davison and others.

Perhaps the most striking effect of our reading these nineteenth century materials in the terms of this exchange is the 'foreground' they provide to the paradox that at the time of the flowering of the bush myth in the 1890s, Australian society was not only confronted with the serious questions posed by the actions of the workers' movement but also characterised by a marked process of urbanisation. (This will be discussed in the next course: Course HP02b, *Urban Australia*.)

There is no simple solution to this contradiction. What it indicates is something - no more than a first glimpse - of the complex relations that exist between historical experience and literary production. And it is clear that these relations are not only complex, but also changing. This fact of change (which becomes a primary object of investigation in the later course, HP05a, *Work in History*, allows us to make two final remarks on which you might reflect. Both concern the particular conditions that obtained in the nineteenth century in Australia and elsewhere:

1. It seems quite natural that the bush legend, this ideal image of the bushman whom Ward calls a 'national culture-hero', should have appeared in literature. But would it be the case today that literature would be the medium in which the image of a national culture-hero would be produced and disseminated?

   This question - and particularly an answer to it that would see film and television, or advertising and political propaganda as the current media for establishing such an image - suggests the possibility that the forms and institutions in which nationalist images and ideals became manifest and tangible are themselves subject to historical change, being different in the nineteenth century from those that are dominant today.

2. In *The Bush Legend*, you have been working within the terms of two disciplines: the study of literature and the study of history. These disciplines, like the forms and institutions of nationalism mentioned in the preceding remark, have their history. Like the image of the bush and the bushman that we have investigated, these disciplines are themselves made in their history: they are historical artefacts.

   In later courses, and particularly in Phase 2 of the degree, you will be able to follow up some of the radical consequences of treating disciplines and the knowledges they represent as products of their time and place, i.e., as historical artefacts.

   For the present, in the context of our investigation of one aspect of the development in the nineteenth century of an Australian nationalism, you might reflect on the possibility that these two disciplines of literature and history themselves are not without relation to the nationalisms of that period. It was, after all, in the nineteenth century that literature and history became organised as systematic fields of investigation and training for students in various national programmes of popular education.

It is beyond the scope of this course to ask the question of what were exactly the relations between the founding and perpetuation of national cultures or cultural nationalisms on the one hand, and the founding and perpetuation of the disciplines of literature (which would provide a culture with a myth of origin and a set of approved images of conduct) and history (which would provide that culture with again an origin and also an ideal future destiny) on the other.

Nevertheless, it is worth keeping these broader questions on your agenda as you move to the more particular focus of the assessment item for the course. This brings you back to the practical task of reading and commenting on

a number of Australian literary works from the period that we have studied. It also gives you some opportunity to demonstrate a selective knowledge both of the historical materials we have considered as evidence of the nineteenth century context and of the debates about the period that subsequently have taken place.

TUTORIAL TWO

This tutorial is designed for students who have finished a first reading of the complete study guide and readings. Students who have not yet done so should feel free to come, however, since much of the work will involve group discussion of some fairly short literary works.

The general purposes of the tutorial are three:

1. to recapitulate key issues of the course as a whole
2. to practice techniques of literary analysis on a small number of poems and stories
3. to give advice on the assessment item.

You should bring to the tutorial:

- all course materials and textbooks
- notes, SAQ answers, etc. on the literary pieces on the course
- questions, problems, notes and any other preparatory work you may have done toward the assessment item.

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FURTHER READING

These readings are suggested for those who wish to explore some themes and issues further. They are not required for the assessment item.

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* This book is a set text for Course HP04b, *Literary Studies.*

ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

SAQ 1 (p.9)

1. Both 'mystique' (twice) and 'myth' are used as synonyms for 'legend'. Other words, such as 'stereotype', 'self-image' and 'national character', though they are not used quite interchangeably with 'legend', are very closely related to it.

2. Those meanings of 'legend' which point to legendary persons and, by extension, to the qualities that make them legendary, rather than legend meaning a story.

3. By 'typical' Ward seems to mean an aggregate of nationally distinctive characteristics. By 'average', he means something like the statistically usual characteristics of most real Australians.

SAQ 2 (p.17)

These two stanzas bound a sequence of four (10-13) which seem to represent, in mythological terms, the destructive effect of the 'colonial connection' on indigenous artistic talent.

The image is of a devoted courtier or suitor striving to please a merciless mistress. The only sign of favour he receives is a 'Tarpeian gift', i.e., a form of death warrant for the soul. How does this 'death' occur and what does it really entail? The thirteenth stanza suggests an answer. When the 'indigenous' artist seeks to realise the value of his talent (by answering the 'call of London', either literally or figuratively), he thereby subjects himself to market forces of a 'homogenising' kind, and these ultimately strip his work of its indigenous qualities - it becomes 'bland,/And urbanised, and prim' - while at the same time, ironically, destroying its marketability. The cultural metropolis requires the fresh, rough qualities of indigenous art, but in consuming them it destroys them, and the artist, now deprived of his original marketable commodity and his own artistic integrity, is discarded. The 'strangling' image is quite appropriate.

You might like to think about the relevance of the process Daley seems to be representing here to areas of modern Australian culture, such as rock music.

SAQ 3 (p.20)

The point of the question is to reinforce your understanding of Williams's development of the city/country opposition from a simple poetic one (babbling brooks versus polluted rivers) or a geographical one (Sydney versus Dubbo) to cover a whole set of possible cultural oppositions.

Given this intellectual move from a simple geographical or industrial difference between two 'places', there are many ways in which the concept 'city' is used by many different groups to connote or mean many different things as opposed to the 'country'. A partial list could read like this:

City		Country
city corporation	:	local community
professional work	:	seasonal tasks
middle class	:	men of the land
self-service restaurants	:	home cooking
supermarkets	:	'living off the land'
industry	:	agricultural labour

In many cases these contrasts are accepted as quite 'natural' and in general the city (apart from in the work of writers and artists who romanticise the bush) is seen as the place of opportunity and the centre of political power - hence this possible final opposition:

city power : rural survival

SAQ 4 (p.24)

Your answer should note some of the points listed in the study guide below SAQ 4 (pp.24-25).

SAQ 5 (p.26)

1. Timber work (sawing and splitting), cattle management (bullock-driving), and shearing were some of the kinds of work available. Ward's argument is that because such labour was (a) physically demanding (b) fairly skilled and (c) in relatively short supply in the more remote areas, therefore the workers tended to be 'old hands' (ex-convicts) and Currency Lads in the majority - i.e., bearers of the values of the Legend. They also (p.75) had 'an influence and a prestige among their fellows out of all proportion to their number'. Hence, their values and attitudes were the ones that prevailed.

2. The small numbers of clergy in outback areas reinforced, or at least failed to counteract, the anti-clerical attitudes already present among the ex-convicts, many of whom became bushworkers. A partial exception is made (p.94) for Catholic priests, whose brand of religion was in any case 'so purely formal' as to be no curb to the secular, rebellious moral code of the bushworkers.

3. The cultural effects attributed to the scarcity of European women were: 'to generate the cult of mateship in its more restricted and personal sense' (p.99); to produce a cult of masculinity (sometimes contrasting

with an 'unavowed softness') (p.109); to establish firmly the old bush tradition of 'work and burst' (p.100).

SAQ 6 (p.27)

1. You might find: station owner; station manager; stockman; jackeroo; boundary rider; station labourer or hand; teamster; tramp; cockatoo farmer/selector; squatter; shepherd; untouchable; storekeeper; minor official; new chum and old chum; Chinese; Aborigines. (One might also add the various female occupations, not mentioned by Wilkes.)

2. Hierarchical.

3. No. He says it 'has too strong a correspondence with reality to be fundamentally contested, but it does need to be redefined'.

4. Democratic and egalitarian attitudes are mainly applied to social relations within the bush workforce and are strongly limited by gradations of occupation and ethnicity. The bush ethos is thus depicted by Wilkes as operating within an exclusive 'club' of pastoral workers, an 'in-group'.

SAQ 7 (p.28)

1. (Chapter 7)

(a) Your definition should include some of the following characteristics of the set of values and rules of conduct that Ward names the 'up-country ethos':

Manly independence
Egalitarian collectivism or 'mateship'
Conformity to certain forms of behaviour
Adaptability and practical skills
Pride in work
Anti-authoritarianism towards police and church
Male chauvinism
Drunkenness and self-destruction
Nationalism and anti-English feeling

(b) New South Wales and Queensland are said by Ward (p.197) to be the centres of the 'up-country ethos' because of their economic backwardness. Agricultural development in these two colonies lagged behind that in the southern colonies. This backwardness and lack of development allowed the old ways to last longer. You will note the colourful characterisations that contrast Queensland to South Australia (Ward, p.197).

(c) Phrases you might quote include:

p.180 'The work has been done from the life, and for all time, by Furphy, Lawson and Paterson ...'

p.194 '... Furphy reflects very faithfully the bush-workers' attitude'

p.202 'The theme is treated more realistically in another bush song'

However, you might also note an opposite view of the relation of literary writing to experience on p.189, where Ward comments that in a ballad written in the third person (i.e., in a story told about a hero, not told by a hero):

> 'it is as though the singer is commemorating a ritual observance rather than describing life realistically'

You might give some thought to the usefulness of opposing 'ritual observance' to 'realistic description'. What questions might this raise concerning the conventional nature of literary writing?

2. (Chapter 8)

(a) Firstly, Ward insists on the influence of the bush on 'city folk' (pp.208-9); secondly, the economic and cultural (e.g. literary) development which opened the bush to new ideas also brought the old bush ideas into the city populations (pp.210-11), albeit in the 'embalmed' form of a national myth about the human values embodied in bush life in the figure of the 'noble bushman' adopted in both city and country alike (pp.211-12).

(b) Ward discusses the *Bulletin* on pp.221-27. He notes the following features of the 'up-country ethos' as it appeared in this metropolitan Sydney journal:

- a general demand by readers for materials about the bush (pp.221-22)
- the restoration, in 1881, of the bush-ballad genre, marked by the values characteristic of the ethos, but also appearing as the 'indigenous and nationalist' form of Australian writing (p.222).
- the figure of the bushman became the fundamental figure of Australian writing, in part through the pages of the *Bulletin*, helping the *Bulletin* to differentiate itself from all other Australian journals and newspapers (which still seem to be copies of their equivalents in the English parent tradition).
- the political stance of the *Bulletin* reflected that held by the pastoral workers (republicanism,

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democracy, non-religious education, nationalism - which might be racist - egalitarianism, anti-authoritarianism (pp.224-25).

SAQ 8 (pp.30-31)

1. (a) The notion of a 'conscience collective' refers to the popular or group values and cultural beliefs of a particular society or group in society. Included in such cultural beliefs would be the acceptance of mythologised concepts such as 'the bushman' etc.

   (b) The hazards of this method are greatly multiplied when we apply it to a post-industrial, culturally derivative society. In other words Davison argues that the notion is too accessible, but fails to deal with a whole range of mediating influences, demographic and economic facts, historical events and so on. It would be hard (and somewhat mystical in thrust) to utterly deny such a notion, but equally difficult to make myth and legend the primary base for analysing an historical period (as indeed Ward does).

   (c) Davison's central assertion is that Ward's work relies on a total acceptance of the concept and its use as a basis for cultural/historical analysis and description.

2. Folk history here has a double sense: firstly, that of the social and cultural history of a people as revealed through a study of popular culture; and secondly, the acceptance (as in Ward) of folk myth and popular stereotype as a solid or even reliable form of evidence for historical work.

3. Davison feels that Russel Ward has the whole argument back to front. In the key statement on p.11, Davison says:

   > the apotheosis (of the 1890s) ... was not the transmission to the city of values nurtured on the bush frontier so much as the projection onto the outback of values revered by an alienated urban intelligentsia

   Davison then attempts to render material and concrete what the 'mythologists' leave vague and unargued; in so doing, he firmly rejects the substance of the 'Ward thesis' - precisely because it accepts myth at the very moment when it should be questioned.

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SAQ 9 (p.32)

1. (a) The convicts were largely ignored by the makers of the 'pioneer legend', or else their capacity for rehabilitation as free settlers was stressed. By contrast, the 'bush legend' celebrates the convicts as the original representatives of anti-authoritarianism, egalitarianism and mateship.

   (b) The squatters (together with the selectors) were regarded as heroic individualists, pitting their skill and courage against a hostile land; in the 'bush legend' they are identified as the class enemy of the 'true' Australian, the bushworker.

   (c) The pioneer legend accords no respect to the Aborigines whatever; they are seen as a hindrance to pastoral expansion. However, the bush legend is no less racist in its nineteenth-century manifestations, though there is the potential for a more enlightened view, perhaps taken up in this century by 'bush nationalists' like Xavier Herbert.

   (d) Women occupy a more important place in the pioneer legend than in the bush legend. This can perhaps be related to the emphasis on the family in the typical 'pioneering' situation.

   (e) The bush itself is seen as a hostile environment, conquered and tamed by the pioneers. In the bush legend it is viewed more positively: the bushman is 'in tune' with his surroundings, not in constant conflict with them.

2. The opening up of the western plains (reading 8, pp.8-9) - hence, in particular, the crossing of the Blue Mountains. This was regarded (e.g. by James Collier) as the beginning of a freer, more independent state of Australian society.

3. Patrick White and Judith Wright have (in a very limited sense only) helped to perpetuate it. Xavier Herbert and Brian Penton actively opposed it in their novels; their critique was directed to the glossing over, by the legend, of the real brutality and exploitation of the early settlers' lives.

SAQ 10 (p.36)

1. Your list should include the following: land, railways, tariffs, education, finance, unions, Depression, population, Federation.

2. Three examples will suffice:

(a) land - conflict between squatters and farmers (i.e., selectors).

(b) education - the provision of free, compulsory and secular education.

(c) tariffs - the conflict between Free Traders and Protectionists.

SAQ 11 (p.37)

Introduction: Bear in mind that this singular event took place less than seventy years after the founding of the colony. But by this time transportation was one of the main issues debated, since the continued transference of convicts to Australia clearly marked it as a colony, and an inferior one at that.

1. Implicit in the speeches made on that day, and often explicit (p.244) is the notion that as free settlers were building a respectable new future for themselves, the further transportation of convicts would destroy these gains by the continued introduction of British crime ... and British misery.

   In addition the speakers repeated the belief that as long as Australia was used as a dumping ground the settlers, particularly the farmers, could not create a respectable society ('the loss of a good name' p.244).

   Asserted constantly throughout the debate (particularly by Mr Lamb) was the idea that the addition of further convicts simply perpetrated a form of slavery, that in Britain itself had been done away with.

   Note particularly the summary of arguments on p.246.

2. Repeated by all speakers is an intense affirmation of loyalty to the Crown and often (cf. Dr Aaron) the insistence that Australia was a part of Britain and should therefore not be degraded in the ways enumerated on p.246.

   In general, therefore, a feeling pervades these speeches that those living and thriving in Australia are still British, of good intention, and should be no longer 'degraded'.

SAQ 12 (p.38)

1. (a) Disrespect for colonial government and local law enforcement among the miners (p.280).

   (b) Development of a 'pioneering' spirit of independent economic enterprise among the miners (pp.281-82).

(c) Experience of social and political 'self-management' procedures - 'on the spot' discussion of issues, election of miners' representatives, forming delegations, writing petitions etc. (pp.280-82, 288).

2. (a) The fear of widespread anarchy and crime, and the consequent desire, in some quarters, for more government intervention and enforcement (pp.285, 286, 291).

(b) The suggestions that the Gold Rush was a form of social pathology ('Gold Fever'), rather than a display of rational aspirations or motivations (pp.290, 293).

You might also note the perceptions of goldfields society itself as an unstable, transient, and demographically anomalous community (more men than women, etc.) (pp.287, 291-92). It could be argued that anomalous social phenomena of this kind are unlikely to have had a significant permanent effect on Australian social life.

SAQ 13 (pp.39-40)

Introduction: Not just in style, but in point-of-view, these verses are very much an outsider's view of Australia - the view of people lured (or dragged) into an alien situation.

1. In terms of the 'lures of Australia' these songs invariably depict a third party claiming virtues that may or may not exist. (Even in 'The Old Bullock Dray' the theme is one of potential rather than a realised life.) In the ballads, 'Billy Barlow in Australia', 'Pat Malone', and 'The Bush of Australia', the agent that leads the hero to an unhappy life in Australia is invariably the Australian equivalent of the American 'snake-oil merchant', promising all, delivering nothing.

2. 'The Old Bullock Dray' has survived (or outlived) the other ballads because of a certain optimism - a belief that work and an amount of suffering will, perhaps, offer a number of rewards to the worker. Such rewards may be the same as in any other country, perhaps, but at least they are possible in a difficult and often frightening non-European environment.

3. Again, only in 'The Old Bullock Dray' is Australia seen as a place that might offer reward for work. In the other ballads it is invariably the shyster who benefits - from making money out of other, less well-informed, immigrants. The stereotype of the bush con man is one that recurs in Australian literature to this day: many of his qualities are still celebrated or vilified; he is the opportunist who controls the life of others.

SAQ 14 (p.42)

1. English.

2. (a) Its enshrinement in a literary tradition.

   (b) Its association with his own (English) past.

3. To the Aborigines.

SAQ 15 (p.46)

1. The desert is both the harshest and the most distinctively Australian physical environment. The Muse of the Desert embodies the possibility of a poetry which is completely at one with this environment. She is silent because, in Daley's view, there were as yet no poets in whose work this complete assimilation had been achieved. He foresees that when this occurs, the literature thus produced will be 'great' - presumably because it will be the most essentially Australian, and because it will be able to draw upon such a wealth of tragic human experience (e.g. the expedition of Bourke and Wills).

2. The notion of the Australian desert as a potential source of superior wisdom is certainly present in both poems. In the earlier poem the contrast is with the softer, less distinctively Australian forms of landscape; in the later one, it is with the softer, more cultivated civilization of Europe. You might note the greater circumspection with which Hope makes his claim.

SAQ 16 (p.47)

Two features might be noted as producing something of an 'Australian effect'. Both are fairly minimal:

(a) The use of the colour 'brown', first to describe Mary's hands (st.1), then to designate 'summer' (st.4). Both represent departures from English literary conventions, the former from the romantic stereotype of the white-handed heroine: brown hands, conventionally suggestive of ugliness or low social rank, here suggest instead an image of the suntanned 'woman of the bush' (cf. 'The Drover's Wife'). The latter instance specifically evokes the harsh dryness of an Australian inland summer.

(b) You might also note that in the last stanza the sliprails, which epitomise the Australian setting, are relegated to a vanished past. They have been replaced by a 'great white gate', and the hut by a 'brick house'. These signs of new wealth perhaps suggest the historical context of the nineties' depression, in which small

selections were bought up and consolidated by wealthy grazing interests, backed by the banks. In other words, Lawson has hinted at a specifically Australian cause and context for the nostalgia characteristic of the 'rural complaint' described by Raymond Williams. (See reading 1.)

SAQ 17 (p.50)

1. Your list should include the following items:

   (a) colonial status, its problems and possibilities

   (b) social and political reform

   (c) Chinese immigration and the white Australia policy

2. p.393 (1) The Chinese Question (1 May, 1890)

   p.395 (2) A comment on the Chinese (28 July, 1888)

   p.396 (3) A comment on the Japanese 'The Japanese Invasion' (31 August, 1895). (Note the slighting references to the little 'brown' men.) The title above is hardly lacking in scare tactics.

   p.417 (4) Humiliation and prayer a patently anti-clerical polemic

   p.446ff. (5) Various examples of *Bulletin* obsessions

   The extract on p.446 (17 June, 1893) is worth noting. The *Bulletin* may not have consistently adhered to its programme, but the rhetoric was always there. Some of the themes like abolition of the monarchy (p.449) and 'On English titles' (p.450) are issues still very much with us today.

SAQ 18 (p.53)

The question asks you to recognise that the two figures are fundamentally different literary stereotypes, despite the fact that both are - in a very general sense - men of the bush. The man from Ironbark is comically naive, and his only apparent virtue is his physical strength. Clancy, on the other hand, clearly stands for the serious 'bush' virtues of spiritual independence and mateship. This difference could be tied to social context, i.e., the difference between rural townships and the more sparsely populated cattle country of the far west. It could also be tied to literary context, i.e., you might recognise the familiar, and by no means distinctively Australian, literary stereotype of the 'country bumpkin' behind the man from Ironbark. Clancy's relationship to pre-existing literary

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conventions is much less clear, and different stereotypes would be involved.

SAQ 19 (p.59)

1. The usual verb tense for realistic fictional narrative such as this is the past tense. An unusual feature of this story is the frequency of present tense verbs.

2. There is a fairly constant alternation from present to past tense and back again. You may at first assume (as I did) that the use of present and past tenses corresponds to the alternation between present and past events, i.e., that verb tense is tied to fictional time. There is some truth in this, but more careful reading shows that at certain points the correspondence breaks down, and we can find past events in the woman's life being narrated in the present tense. The two forms of alternation are therefore only partially related, but it could be argued that they are mutually reinforcing devices, since both have a 'universalising' effect. (See 3 below)

3. If you came up with answers of your own before reading this, they may well have included a 'sense of immediacy'. There is certainly some truth in this. Generally speaking, a strategically placed present tense can make an action seem to be happening 'now'. But this is not always, perhaps not even usually, the effect of the present tense, especially when it is not used sparingly, which it isn't here. Another effect, which the proliferation of instances only reinforces, is to give a sense of open-endedness, an unfinished effect, to actions and even to whole narratives where, as here, the relative finality conveyed by the past tense is lacking. This open-ended effect reinforces the sense of the snake dilemma as an everyday affair in the woman's life, the kind of thing she has to cope with all the time; it also underlines the pathos of the final scene by implying, very subtly, that the family's situation has no end in sight.

   Remember, too, that the present tense does not only convey single actions in the present. It also conveys repetitive action for an indefinite period, as in 'He catches the 7.30 train to work'. If just some of the present tense verbs in the story are read in that way, the effect would clearly be to suggest the permanence of the woman's dilemma. But note that in doing that it also contributes indirectly to her legendary status. By 'universalising' her in time, the present tense helps to make her into a mythic figure.

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SAQ 20 (p.62)

The women's behaviour reveals a context of 'normal' assumptions about women's proper subservience to their husbands. In terms of these assumptions, the 'mate' has always been regarded as an outsider and a threat by the other women, and they treat her accordingly now. The misplaced sympathy they feel for Squeaker is as much a consequence of these 'normal' assumptions as their lack of sympathy for the mate. Squeaker's own lack of sympathy for her and his continued expectations of service from her even after her injury are merely products of the woman's own attitudes and assumptions.

GLOSSARY OF LITERARY CRITICAL TERMS

The brief definitions given below of literary critical terms used in this study guide (where they are italicised and marked with an asterisk) are in no way exhaustive. On the one hand, these merely practical definitions could always be extended; on the other, there is no clear boundary between terms in general use and terms that could, at present, be classified as part of the technical lexicon of literary criticism. As a result, the following definitions include some items that are used in everyday conversation as well as in the writings of literary critics.

It is suggested that you also consult a dictionary in the case of new or uncertain terms, whether or not the definition is included here.

Allegorical: from allegory, which is a form of extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. Thus it represents one thing in the guise of another - an abstraction in that of a concrete image.

Allusion: A reference in a work to another work or literary figure such as a famous scene or character.

Arcady: (or Arcadia) was originally a primitive region of Ancient Greece; it came to signify, in Latin and later poetry, the ideal land where peace and simplicity prevailed in an essentially rural or pastoral setting.

Ballad: The popular ballad (or folk or traditional ballad) is a song, transmitted orally, that tells a story. Composed to a set formula in rhythm and rhyme, the ballad typically recounts the adventures or incidents in the life of an 'heroic' person.

Commentary: A general term to describe writings, not themselves literary, on literary works. Commentary can include description of the work and its author, analysis of the language of the work, as well as critical comments on the value or historical fortune of the work.

Connotation: An associated but not essential meaning.

Convention: An established and repeated pattern, form or figure; some literary conventions are characteristic of a historical period (e.g. revenge stories in Elizabethan drama), others of a national literature (e.g. the bush myth in Australian writing); still others characterise a particular genre or type of writing.

Diction: The words selected for a text, particularly a poem.

Form of address: The relation between the literary work and its reader can vary considerably. The work can openly admit the presence of a reader by addressing him (or her) directly: 'Dear Reader, you will of course remember that in the previous chapter...' In such a case, something like a conversation occurs between the 'I' of the work and the 'you' that reads it. In other cases, such as many novels, no direct address is made to the reader. However, even in this case the reader is set in a certain relation to the work by such phrases as 'Here in these streets' or 'At that time', phrases which involve the reader's knowing something. You can ask yourselves whether a work directly addresses a reader as 'you', whether it implies a male or female reader, a knowing or an innocent reader, whether or not it talks down to a reader, etc.

Formula: A *plot device** (see below).

Image: Whilst 'image' is equated, in the first instance, with 'picture' (i.e., to be taken as a visual reference), the term is also used in a more general sense to name the organising concept or theme of a work (e.g. the image of the bush).

Interpretation: The attachment of a meaning or meanings to statements or texts.

Irony: Lengthy definitions have been written of irony; it is sufficient here to refer to it as a form of critical or negative comment, in which the implicit meaning of a phrase is different from the meaning that appears on the surface.

Narrative: A term to describe the principles that organise a 'story' (clearly not all literary writings are recognised as narrative). An ancient definition suggests that the distinguishing features of narrative are recognisable beginning, middle and end sections (i.e., a sequence of actions) in a text.

Plot device: If plot refers to the organisation of events in a narrative or story, plot device refers to one element of such organisation. In particular, such events as shipwrecks, the arrival of a long lost relative or, for English stories, the despatch of a difficult parent to Australia, are examples of such devices used repetitively in popular fiction.

Rhetoric: Rhetoric is the set of techniques or precepts for ordering statements so that they produce persuasive effects on audiences or readers. A rhetorical device is therefore one such mechanism or trick with language to produce an effect. The effect is known as a rhetorical effect.

Stanza: The group of lines in a poem that form a verse.

Style: The distinguishing feature of a writer or a work, or a group of writers or a group of works. A colloquial style is thus the feature that distinguishes a work as being written in the manner of everyday speech.

Theme: The concept (or set of concepts) that organises a literary work. It may be defined as the fundamental idea in a work (of course, a work may contain more than one theme).

Tone: Originally a musical term, tone refers to a characteristic in a work that is something other than its argument or the object referred to in the work; tone can be considered to be one of the qualities of the linguistic expression of a literary work, the 'voice' which speaks (for example, ironically) therein.

Verse form: The patterning of lines, rhythms and sounds in conventional forms, such as ballads, couplets, sonnets.